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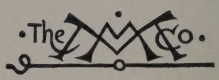
OLD LAMPS FOR NEW



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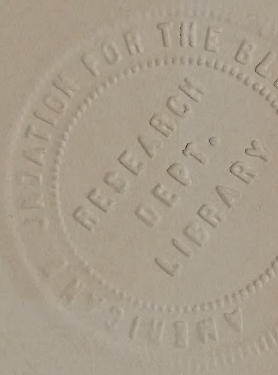
The Head of a Young Girl,
by Jan Vermeer of Delft,
from the Picture at the Mauritshuis
at the Hague.

OLD LAMPS FOR NEW

BY

E. V. LUCAS

AUTHOR OF "OVER BEMERTON'S"
"MR. INGLESIDE," ETC.



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OLD LAMPS FOR NEW

OLD LAMPS FOR NEW

The School for Sympathy

I HAD heard a great deal about Miss Beam's school, but not till last week did the chance come to visit it.

The cabman drew up at a gate in an old wall, about a mile out of the town. I noticed as I was waiting for him to give me change that the Cathedral spire was visible down the road. I rang the bell, the gate automatically opened, and I found myself in a pleasant garden facing a square red ample Georgian house, with the thick white window-frames that to my eyes always suggest warmth and welcome and stability. There was no one in sight but a girl of about twelve, with her eyes covered with a bandage, who was being led carefully between the flower-beds by a little boy of some four years her junior. She stopped, and evidently asked who it was that had come in, and he seemed to be describing me to her. Then they passed on, and I entered the door which a smiling parlour-maid — that pretty sight! — was holding open for me.

Miss Beam was all that I had expected — middle-aged, authoritative, kindly, and understanding. Her hair was beginning to turn grey, and her figure had a fulness likely to be comforting to a homesick child.

We talked idly for a little while, and then I asked her some questions as to her scholastic methods, which I had heard were simple.

"Well," she said, "we don't as a matter of fact do much teaching here. The children that come to me — small girls and smaller boys — have very few formal lessons: no more than is needful to get application into them, and those only of the simplest — spelling, adding, subtracting, multiplying, writing. The rest is done by reading to them and by illustrated discourses, during which they have to sit still and keep their hands quiet. Practically there are no other lessons at all."

"But I have heard so much," I said, "about the originality of your system."

Miss Beam smiled. "Ah, yes," she said. "I am coming to that. The real aim of this school is not so much to instil thought as thoughtfulness — humanity, citizenship. That is the ideal I have always had, and happily there are parents good enough to trust me to try and put it into execution. Look out of the window a minute, will you?"

I went to the window, which commanded a large garden and playground at the back.

"What do you see?" Miss Beam asked.

"I see some very beautiful grounds," I said, "and a lot of jolly children; but what perplexes me, and pains me too, is to notice that they are not all as healthy and active as I should wish. As I came in I saw one poor little thing being led about owing to some trouble with her eyes, and now I can see two more in the same plight; while there is a girl with a crutch just under the window watching the others at play. She seems to be a hopeless cripple."

Miss Beam laughed. "Oh, no," she said; "she's not lame, really; this is only her lame day. Nor are those others blind; it is only their blind day." I must have looked very much astonished, for she laughed again. "There you have an essential part of our system in a nutshell. In order to get a real appreciation and understanding of misfortune into these young minds we make them participants in misfortune too. In the course of the term every child has one blind day, one lame day, one deaf day, one maimed day, one dumb day. During the blind day their eyes are bandaged absolutely, and it is a point of honour not to peep. The bandage is put on overnight; they wake blind. This means that they need assistance in everything, and other children are told off to help them and lead them about. It is educative to both of them — the blind and the helpers.

"There is no privation about it," Miss Beam continued. "Every one is very kind and it is really something of a joke, although, of course, before the day is over the reality of the affliction must be apparent even to the least thoughtful. The blind day is, of course, really the worst," she went on, "but some of the children tell me that the dumb day is the most dreaded. There, of course, the child must exercise will-power only, for the mouth is not bandaged. . . . But come down into the garden and see for yourself how the children like it."

Miss Beam led me to one of the bandaged girls, a little merry thing, whose eyes under the folds were, I felt sure, as black as ash-buds. "Here's a gentleman come to talk to you," said Miss Beam, and left us.

"Don't you ever peep?" I asked, by way of an opening.

"Oh, no," she exclaimed; "that would be cheating. But I'd no idea it was so awful to be blind. You can't see a thing. One feels one is going to be hit by something every moment. Sitting down's such a relief."

"Are your guides kind to you?" I asked.

"Pretty good. Not so careful as I shall be when it's my turn. Those that have been blind already are the best. It's perfectly ghastly not to see. I wish you'd try!"

"Shall I lead you anywhere?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," she said; "let's go for a little walk. Only you must tell me about things. I shall be so glad when to-day's over. The other bad days can't be half as bad as this. Having a leg tied up and hopping about on a crutch is almost fun, I guess. Having an arm tied up is a little more troublesome, because you have to get your food cut up for you, and so on; but it doesn't really matter. And as for being deaf for a day, I shan't mind that — at least, not much. But being blind is so frightening. My head aches all the time, just from dodging things that probably aren't there. Where are we now?"

"In the playground," I said, "going towards the house. Miss Beam is walking up and down the terrace with a tall girl."

"What has the girl got on?" my companion asked.

"A blue serge skirt and pink blouse."

"I think it's Millie," she said. "What colour hair?"

"Very light," I said.

"Yes, that's Millie. She's the head girl. She's awfully decent."

"There's an old man tying up roses," I said.

"Yes, that's Peter. He's the gardener. He's hundreds of years old!"

"And here comes a dark girl in red, on crutches."

"Yes," she said; "that's Beryl."

And so we walked on, and in steering this little thing about I discovered that I was ten times more thoughtful already than I had any notion of, and also that the necessity of describing the surroundings to another makes them more interesting.

When Miss Beam came to release me, I was quite sorry to go, and said so.

"Ah!" she replied; "then there is something in my system after all!"

I walked back to the town murmuring (inaccurately as ever) the lines: —

> Can I see another's woe
> And not share their sorrow too?
> O no, never can it be,
> Never, never, can it be.

On the Track of Vermeer

NOT long ago the papers contained a little paragraph stating that Herr Bredius, the curator of the Mauritshuis Gallery at the Hague, had just returned from a journey of exploration in Russia, bringing back with him over a hundred valuable pictures of the Dutch School which he had discovered there, in country and city mansions and even in farmhouses; for the Russian collectors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as is well known, greatly esteemed and desired (as who must not?) Dutch art. That was all that the paragraph said, and since that was all we may feel quite sure that among those hundred and more pictures there was nothing from the divinely gifted hand of Jan Vermeer of Delft; because the discovery of a new picture by Jan Vermeer of Delft is something not merely for mention in a paragraph but among the special news — something with which to agitate the cables of the world.

Can you conceive of a more delightful existence than that of Herr Bredius — to be when at home the conservator of such masterpieces as hang in the

Mauritshuis on the banks of the Vyver, in the beautiful and bland Dutch capital (some of which are his own property, and only lent to the gallery), and when in mind to travel, to leave the Hague with a roving commission to hunt and acquire new treasures? I can't. And that is why, when I am asked who I would choose to be were I not myself, I do not say the King, or Mr. Pierpont Morgan, but Herr Bredius of the Mauritshuis.

And yet if I had Mr. Pierpont Morgan's wealth, I would . . . But let us consider first the life and works of Jan Vermeer of Delft.

Jan Vermeer, or Van der Meer, was born in Delft and baptized there on 31 October, 1632. His father was Reymer Janszoon Vermeer, and his mother Dingnums Balthasars. In 1653 he married, also in Delft, Catherina Bolnes or Bolenes. How many children they had I do not know, but eight survived him. It is generally believed that Karel Fabritius, himself a pupil of Rembrandt and a painter of extraordinary distinction, was Vermeer's instructor; but the period of tuition must have been very short, for Fabritius became a member of the Delft Guild in 1652, before which he might not teach, and he was dead in 1654, killed by a powder explosion. A poem on the death of this great painter by a Delft writer has a stanza to the effect that from the ashes of that Phœnix rises Vermeer. There is very little of the work of Fabritius

to be seen; but his exquisite "Siskin," a small picture of the little musical shy bird, painted with the breadth that is commonly kept for auguster subjects, hangs next Vermeer's "Head of a Young Girl" (my frontispiece) at the Hague, and would alone prove Fabritius to have possessed not only strength but sweetness.

Dr. Hofstede de Groot, the author of a magnificent monograph on Vermeer and Fabritius, published in 1907 and 1908, conjectures Vermeer to have had an Italian master as well as a Dutch, and it is easy to believe. I had, indeed, with none of Dr. de Groot's knowledge, come to a similar conclusion; and in the huddle of pictures in one of the rooms of the Academy at Vienna I even found a copy of an Italian picture — a Correggio, I think — which Vermeer's hand might easily have made, so luminous and liquid is it. That he visited Italy is more than unlikely — practically impossible; but to gain that something Italianate which his works occasionally discover there was no necessity for him to have done so, for Italian painters settled in Holland in some numbers. The "Diana and her Nymphs" at the Hague, and the "Christ in the House of Martha and Mary" (which I have seen only in reproduction) in Scotland, have each Italian characteristics; but I must add that in Vermeer's authorship of these pictures Dr. de Groot does not absolutely believe.

The facts about Vermeer are singularly few, considering the high opinion in which he was held by contemporaries. Almost the only intimate thing told of him is the story of his unpaid bread bill, as recounted by De Monconys, the French traveller. De Monconys visited him in 1663 and wanted to buy a picture, but none could be found in the artist's house. Vermeer's baker consented, however, to sell one which was hanging on his wall and for which he had allowed 300 florins. After Vermeer's death, it is told, the baker's debt of 3176 florins was liquidated by two pictures. Since Vermeer's wife is known to have had rich relations and to have come into money from time to time, we may guess this gigantic account to have been the result rather of bad management than of poverty; for of all the painters of the world none less suggests necessity than Jan Vermeer of Delft: on the contrary, his work carries with it the idea of aristocracy and prosperity, certainly a fastidiousness rarely associated with the father of a large family's struggle for existence in the seventeenth century. Moreover, we are told that his prices, even when he was alive, were higher than those of any painter save Gerard Dou, and such a guild as that of Delft would not be likely to elect a starving man as its chief four several times.

No, if Vermeer owed money to his baker it was because he was easy-going, placid, above such

trifles, as other artists have been before and since: indeed, occasionally still are, I am told. You can see that Vermeer was placid: the fact shines in every picture. He was placid, and he liked others to be placid too. His wife was placid, his daughters (if, as I conjecture, certain of his models were his daughters) were placid, his sitters were placid. His one undisputed landscape shows that he wanted nature to be placid; his one street scene has the dove brooding upon it.

Yet when we put in one balance the debt for bread and in the other the very slender output of this famous artist, to whom a collector could come even from distant France with a heavy purse, we are face to face with a difficulty; because even placid men when they become chiefs of guilds do not much care for continual reminders that they owe money, and in such a small town as Delft Vermeer and his baker would have had some difficulty in not often meeting. Moreover what of the butcher? And the vintner? The inference therefore — especially when it is remembered that the baker occasionally agreed to be paid in kind and hang we know not which of the masterpieces on his wall — the inference therefore is that Vermeer painted, was forced by necessity to paint, many pictures in excess of the very small number at the present moment identifiable. Of this, more later; but I want to bring out the point here, since

it is of the highest importance and might indeed completely alter the life of Mr. Pierpont Morgan.

We may believe Vermeer to have been a home-keeping man from several circumstances. One is that he was not only born in Delft (in 1632), but he married in Delft (in 1653) and died in Delft (in 1675); another that the years in which he was a chief of the Delft Guild, and therefore a resident there, were 1662, 1663, 1670 and 1671; another that his only famous landscape and his only known street scene are both Delft subjects; and another that of his thirty odd known figure pictures, thirty-one are lighted from the left precisely in the same way, which leads one to suppose that most of them were painted in the same studio.

When I add that Vermeer died in December, 1675, at the early age of 43, and that his executor was Antony van Leeuwenhoek, the inventor of the microscope (and probably his model for several pictures), I have said all that is known for certain of his career.

To me it is not to Andrea del Sarto that the title of the "Perfect Painter" belongs, but to Jan Vermeer of Delft. Andrea with all his weakness was in a way greater than that: he had, one can see, finer thoughts, sweeter imaginings, a richer nature than a perfect painter needs; the phrase perfect painter limits him to the use of his brush, and one thinks of him (and not wholly because

Browning was a man of genius) always as a human being too. But of Vermeer we know nothing save that he was a materialistic Dutchman who applied paint to canvas with a dexterity and charm that have never been equalled: in short, with perfection. His pictures tell us that he was not imaginative and not unhappy; they do not suggest any particular richness of personality; there is nothing in them or in his life to inspire a poet as Andrea and Lippo Lippi inspired Browning and Romney Tennyson. Vermeer was not like that. But when it comes to perfection in the use of paint, when it comes to the perfect painter — why, here he is. His contemporary Rembrandt of the Rhine is a giant beside him; but ruggedness was part of his strength. His contemporary, Frans Hals of Haarlem, could dip his brush in red and transform the pigment into pulsating blood with one flirt of his wrist, and yet think of his splendid carelessnesses elsewhere. His contemporary, Jan Steen of Leyden, had a way of kindling with a touch an eye so that it danced with vivacity and dances still, after all these years; but what a sloven he could be in his backgrounds! His contemporary Peter de Hooch could flood canvas with the light of the sun, but how weakly drawn are some of his figures! And so one might go on with the other great painters — the Italians and the Spanish and the English and the French; naming one after another,

all with more to them as personalities than Vermeer, all doing work of greater import; and all, even Michael Angelo and Leonardo, even Correggio, even Raphael, even Andrea, even Chardin, falling beneath Vermeer in the mere technical mastery of the brush and the palette — no one having with such accuracy and happiness adjusted the means to the desired end. He aimed low, but at his best — in, say, six pictures — he stands as near perfection as is possible.

It is this joyful mastery that fascinates me and made it so natural, when in the autumn of 1907 I was casting about for a motive for a holiday, to say, "Let us pursue this painter, let us see in twenty-one days all the Vermeers that we can."

The farthest European city containing a Vermeer of which I then knew being Vienna (I afterwards found that Budapest has a putative example), we went there first; and there was a certain propriety in doing so, for in the Vienna picture the artist is supposed to have painted himself, and to begin with a concept of him was interesting and proper. The "Maler," as it is there called, is at Count Czernin's, a comfortable mansion at Number 9 Landes-gericht strasse, open to visitors only on Mondays and Thursdays. There are four rooms of pictures, and nothing in them matters very much save the Vermeer. An elderly butler is on duty; he shows you the best place to

stand in, brings a chair, and murmurs such facts about the marvellous work as appeal most to his imagination — not so much that it is a miracle of painting as that it was acquired for a mere song, and that Americans constantly walk into this room with blank cheques in their hands and entreat the Count to fill them up at his pleasure. But no, the Count is too proud of his possession. Well, I admire him for it. The picture may not have such radiance as the "Pearl Necklace" at Berlin, or such charm as the "Woman Reading a Letter" at the Ryks, or such sheer beauty as the Mauritshuis "Girl's Head," but it is brilliant and satisfying. It does not give me such pleasure as certain others, to be named later, but it is in some ways perhaps finer. Vermeer is seated at his easel with his back to the world — a largish man with long hair under a black velvet cap, and the careful costume of a man who can pay for his bread. Nor does the studio suggest poverty. The artist is at work on the head of a demure damsel whom he has posed near the window, with the light falling upon her, of course from the left. The little mousy thing has a wreath of leaves in her hair and a large book held to her breast; in her right hand is a long musical instrument. On the wall is the most fascinating of the many maps that the artist painted — with twenty little views of Dutch towns in the border. Vermeer was the first to see the decorative possibilities that lie in

cartography; and he was also, one conjectures, a geographer by inclination.

The beautiful blue Danube had so little water in it just then that the voyage to Budapest would have taken almost twice as long as it should, and there was not time. To make the journey by train, just for one day, was an unbearable thought at that moment; although I now regret that we did not go. The Budapest Vermeer is a portrait, a Dutch Vrouw, standing, looking full at the world, without any accessories whatever. Not having seen it, I can express no opinion as to its authorship, but Dr. de Groot is doubtful, although he reproduces the picture in his book among the practical certainties. So also does M. Vanzype, the most recent of our painter's critics, whose monograph, "Vermeer de Delft," in the "Collection des Grands Artistes des Pays-Bas," was published in 1908. M. Vanzype goes farther, for he also includes the portrait of a young man in the Brussels gallery for which the curator, M. A. J. Wauters, has made out so eloquent a case, but which Herr Bredius and Dr. de Groot both repudiate. For myself, all I can say of it is that one does not jump to the denial of it as one did to the putative example in our National Gallery, just completed by the addition of its lost half. The Budapest Vermeer is in reproduction a beautiful picture — a youngish Dutch woman with the inevitable

placidity, but not so open and easy-going as the personalities whom the artist chose for his own pictures: she has folded hands and large white cape and cuffs. M. Vanzype admits that this portrait and that of the young man at Brussels lend colour to the theory of Thoré and M. Arsène Alexandre that Vermeer studied for a while immediately under Rembrandt; but he goes on to show that this was practically an impossibility.

Turning reluctantly away from Budapest, we went next to Dresden, which has two Vermeers and a light and restful hotel, the Bellevue, very agreeable to repose in after our caravanserai at Vienna. The Bellevue is on the bank of the river and close to the Picture Gallery, into which one could therefore drop again and again at off hours. The famous Raphael is of course Dresden's lodestar, and next come the Correggios, and there is a triptych by Jan Van Eyck and a man in armour by Van Dyck; but it is Vermeer of whom we are talking, and the range of Vermeer cannot be understood at all unless one sees him in the capital of Saxony. For it is here that his "Young Courtesan" (chastely softened by the modest Baedeker into "The Young Connoisseur") is found. It is a large picture, for him, nearly five feet by four, and it represents a buxom, wanton girl, of a ripe beauty, dressed in a lace cap and hood and a bright yellow

bodice, considering the value of the *douceur* which a roystering Dutchman is offering her. Behind is an old woman curious as to the result, and beside her is another roysterer, whose face might easily be that unseen one of the artist in the Czernin picture, and who is wearing a similar cap and slashed sleeves. The party stands on a balcony, over the railing of which has been flung one of the heavy tapestries on which our painter loved to spend his genius. The picture is remarkable as being a new thing in Vermeer's career, and indeed a new thing in Dutch art; and it also shows that had Vermeer liked he might have done more with drama, for the faces of the two women are expressive and true; although such was his incorrigible fastidiousness, his preference for the distinguished and radiant to the exclusion of all else, that he cannot make them either ugly or objectionable. The procuress is a Vermeer among procuresses, the courtesan a Vermeer among courtesans. The fascination of the canvas, though totally different from that of any other of his works, is equal in its way to any: it has a large easy power, as well as being a beautiful and daring adventure in colour.

The other Dresden picture is also a little off Vermeer's usual path. The subject is familiar: the Dutch woman reading a letter by a table, on which is the customary cloth and a dish of apples; the light comes through the same window and falls

on the same white wall; but the tone of the work is distinct, sombre green prevailing. It would be thrilling to own this picture, but I do not rank it for allurement or satisfaction with several of the others. It comes with me not even fifth or sixth. Vermeer's best indeed is so wonderful — the "View of Delft," the "Girl's Head" at the Mauritshuis, the "Milkmaid" and "Woman Reading a Letter" at the Ryks, the "Pearl Necklace" at Berlin, the "Street in Delft" at the Six Gallery, and the "Young Courtesan" at Dresden — that anything below that standard — such is the fastidiousness which this man's fastidiousness engenders — quickly disappoints; although the student working up to the best and reaching the best last would be continually enraptured.

Next Berlin. After the "Girl's Head" at the Mauritshuis, which among the figures comes always first with me, and the "View of Delft," it is, I think, the Berlin "Necklace" that is Vermeer's most charming work. I consider the white wall in this painting beautiful beyond the power of words to express. It is so wonderful that if one were to cut out a few square inches of this wall alone and frame it one would have a joy for ever. Franz Hals' planes of black have never been equalled, but Vermeer's planes of white seem to me quite as unapproachable. The whole picture has radiance and light and delicacy: painters

gasp before it. It has more too: it is steeped in a kind of white magic as the "View of Delft" is steeped in the very radiance of the evening sun. Berlin is to me a rude and materialistic city with officials who have made inattention a fine art, and food that sends one to the "Continental Bradshaw" for trains to Paris; but this picture is leaven enough. It lifts Berlin above serious criticism. I hope that when we have fought Germany in the inevitable war of which the papers are so consistently full, it will be part of the indemnity.

The other Vermeer in the superb gallery over which Dr. Bode presides with such dangerous enthusiasm (dangerous, I mean, to other nations), is not so remarkable; but it is burnt into my memory. That white Delft jug I shall never forget. The woman drinking, with her face seen through the glass as Terburg would have done it (one likes to see painters excelling now and again at each other's mannerisms); the rich figure of the Dutch gentleman watching her; the room with its chequered floor: all these I can visualize with an effort; but the white Delft jug requires no effort: the retina never loses it. Vermeer, true ever to his native town and home, painted this jug several times. Not so often as Metsu, but with a greater touch. You find it notably again in the King's example at Windsor Castle.

Berlin has also a private Vermeer which I did

not see — Mr. James Simon's "Mistress and Servant." Judging by the photogravure, this must be magnificent; and it is peculiar in respect of being almost the only picture in which the painter has a plain table-cloth in place of the usual heavily-patterned tapestry. The lady in ermine and pearls is evidently ordering dinner; the placid, pleasant maid has a hint of Maes. The whole effect seems to be rich and warm. Two other pictures I also ought to have seen before leaving Germany — one at Brunswick and one at Frankfort. In the Brunswick painting a coquettish girl takes a glass of wine from a courteous Dutch gentleman at the table, while a sulky Dutch gentleman glooms in the background. On the table is another of the white Delft jugs. The Frankfort picture is "The Geographer at the Window," dated 1668, which in the reproduction strikes one as a most beautiful and dignified work, wholly satisfying. The geographer — probably Antony van Leeuwenhoek — leans at his lighted table over a chart, with his compasses in his hand. All the painter's favourite accessories are here — the heavy tapestry on the table, the window with its small panes, the streaming light of day, the white wall, the chair with its brass-headed nails. And the kind thoughtful face of the geographer makes the whole thing human and humane. Vermeer, I fancy, was never more harmonious than here.

I shall certainly go to Frankfort soon to translate this impression into fact.

At Amsterdam we went first to the grave and noiseless mansion of the Six family at Number 511 Heerengracht, one of the most beautiful and reserved of the canals of this city. A ring at the bell brought a rosy and spotless maid to the door, and she left us for a little while in a lobby from which Vermeer might have chosen his pictures' blue tiles, until a butler led us upstairs to the little gallery. I am writing of 1907, before the negotiations for the purchase by the State of Vermeer's "Milkmaid" were completed, and we therefore saw it in its natural home, where it had been for two hundred and more years. But now, at a cost of 500,000 florins at twelve to the pound (or at nearly £155 a square inch) it has passed to the Ryks. The price sounds beyond reason; but it is not. Granted that a kind and portly Dutchwoman at work in her kitchen is a subject for a painter, here it is done with such mastery, sympathy, and beauty as not only to hold one spellbound but to be beyond appraisement. No sum is too much for the possession of this unique work — unique not only in Vermeer's career (so far as we know), but in all painting. What the artist would have asked for it we do not know. At the sale of his works in 1696 it brought 175 florins.

Vermeer here is at his most vigorous and power-

ful. His other works are notable above everything for charm: such a picture as the "Pearl Necklace" at Berlin represents the ecstasy of perfection in paint; but here we find strength too. I never saw a woman more firmly set upon canvas: I never saw a bodice that was so surely filled with a broad and beating bosom. Only a very great man could so paint that quiet capable face. Some large pictures are very little, and some small pictures are large. This "Milkmaid" by Vermeer is only eighteen inches by fifteen, but it is to all intents and purposes a full length: on no life-size canvas could a more real and living woman be painted. When you are at Amsterdam you cannot give this picture too much attention; be sure to notice also the painting of the hood and the drawing of the still life, especially the jug and the bowl. It was this picture, one feels, that shone before the dear Chardin, all his life, as a star.

The other Six Vermeer is that Delft façade which artists adore. The charm of it is not to be communicated by words, or at any rate by words of mine. It is as though Peter de Hooch had known sorrow, and, emerging triumphant and serene, had begun to paint again. And yet that is, of course, not all; for De Hooch, with all his radiant tenderness, had not this man's native aristocracy of mind, nor could any suffering have given it to him. Like the "View of Delft," like

the "Young Courtesan," this picture stands alone not only in Vermeer's record, but in the art of all time. Many grow the flower now — there is a modern Dutch painter, Breitner, whose whole career is an attempt to reproduce the spirit of this façade — but the originator still stands alone and apart, as indeed, by God's sense of justice, originators are usually permitted to. The sale of twenty-one of Vermeer's pictures at Amsterdam in 1696 included the "Street in Delft" which the Six family own, and also a view of houses, a smaller work, which fetched forty-eight florins. (That is one of the Vermeers which have disappeared, Mr. Pierpont Morgan, sir.)

The Vermeers at the Ryks were, in 1907, two in number (now made three by the "Milkmaid"); and of these one I do not like, however much I am astounded by its dexterity, and one I could never tire of. The picture that I do not like, "The Love Letter," shows, with the "New Testament Allegory" at the Hague, the painter in his most dashing mood of virtuosity. Neither has charm, but both have a masterful dexterity that not only leaves one bewildered but kills all the other *genre* painters in the vicinity. Both were painted, I conjecture, to order, to please some foolish purchaser who frequented the studio. But the other Ryks picture — "The Woman Reading a Letter" — here is the essential Vermeer again in

all his delicacy and quietude. It was the first of his best pictures that I ever saw, and I fell under his spell instantly. What I have said of the "Milkmaid" applies also to the "Reader"; she becomes after a while a full length. The picture is only twenty inches by sixteen, but the woman also takes her place in the memory as life-size. It is one of the simplest of all the pictures: comparable with the "Pearl Necklace," but a little simpler still. The woman's face has been injured, but it does not matter; you don't notice it after a moment; her intent expression remains; her gentle contours are unharmed. The jacket she wears is the most beautiful blue in Holland; the map is a yellowish brown; the wall is white. The woman, whose condition is obviously interesting, is, I like to think, the Vrouw Vermeer, possibly the mother of the young girls in the pictures at the Hague, Vienna and Brussels.

The Hague is the most comfortable city that I know in which to see pictures. It is so light and open, the Oude Doelen is so pleasant a hotel, and the pictures to see are so few — just a handful of old masterpieces at the Mauritshuis and just a handful of the romantics at the Mesdag Museum. That is all; no formal galleries, no headaches. Above all there are here the two most beautiful Vermeers that are known — the "Young Girl" — and the "View of Delft." Writing in another

place some years ago I ventured to call the Mauritshuis picture of a girl's head one of the most beautiful things in Holland. I retract that statement now, and instead say quite calmly that it is *the* most beautiful thing in Holland. And to me it is in many ways not only the most beautiful thing in Holland, but the most satisfying and exquisite product of brush and colour that I have anywhere seen. The painting of the lower lip is as much a miracle to me as the flower of the cow-parsley or the wing of a Small Heath. I said that the "Pearl Necklace" was steeped in white magic. There is magic here too. You are in the presence of the unaccountable. Paint — a recognized medium — has exceeded its power. The line of the right cheek is surely the sweetest line ever traced. I don't expect you to come a stranger to this face and feel what I feel; but I ask you to look at it quietly and steadily for a little while, in its uncoloured photographic presentment, until it smiles back at you again — as surely it will. Yes, even in the photogravure reproduction that stands as frontispiece to this book lurk the ghosts of these smiles.

Who was this child, one wonders. One of the painter's, I think. One of the eight, whom it amused him to dress in this Oriental garb that he might play with the cool harmonies of yellow, green and blue, and the youthful Dutch complexion. If

this is so, it is one of his latest pictures, for all his many children were under age when he died. It is probable that the child in the Duke of Arenberg's picture at Brussels, in the same costume, was a sister. There is certainly a family likeness between the two, and if, as one may reasonably suppose, Vermeer's wife was his model for certain of the other pictures, we may easily believe that both were her daughters, for they have her candid forehead, her placidity.

Think of what has been happening in the world during the years since this sweet face was set upon canvas — the evolutions and tragedies, the lives lived and ended, the whole passionate fretted progress of the nations! "Monna Lisa" has smiled a century and more longer, and she has been looked upon every day for centuries: this child, not a whit less wonderful as a conquest of man over pigment, smiled unseen; for when she was bought at a Hague auction a few years ago by Herr Des Tombes for two florins thirty cents she was covered with grime. Think of it — two florins thirty cents — and if she found her way to Christie's to-day I don't suppose that £50,000 would buy her. I know that I personally would willingly live in a garret if she were on its wall. But leaving aside the human interest of the picture, did you ever see, even in a reproduction, such ease as there is in this painting, such concealment of effort? It was no small thing at

that day for a Dutchman to lay his colours like this, so broadly and lucidly. It is as though the paints evoked life rather than counterfeited it; as though the child was waiting there behind the canvas to emerge at the touch of the brushwand.

And the "View of Delft" — what is one to say of that? Here again perfection is the only word. And more than perfection, for perfection is cold. This picture is warm. Its serenity is absolute; its charm is complete. You stand before it satisfied — except for that heightened emotion, that choking feeling and smarting eyes, which perfection compels. The picture is still the last word in the painting of a town. Not all the efforts of artists since have improved upon it; not one has done anything so beautiful. It is indeed because he painted these two pictures that I have for Jan Vermeer of Delft such a feeling of gratitude and enthusiasm. Wonderful as are many of his other pictures that I have described, they would not alone have subjected me to so much travelling in continental trains by day and night. But to see this head of a young girl and this view of Delft I would go anywhere.

To the "New Testament Allegory" I have referred above: it does not give me pleasure except in its tapestry curtain. That detail is, I suppose, among the wonders of painting. The other Mauritshuis Vermeer is the "Diana and Her

Nymphs" — that gentle Italianate group of fair women, the painting of which Andrea himself might have overlooked. It is at once Vermeer and not Vermeer. It is very rich, very satisfying; but I for one should feel no sense of bereavement if another name were put to it. As a matter of fact Nicholas Maes was long held to have been its author. A fifth Vermeer the Mauritshuis chanced to possess when I was there, for Herr Bredius had recently discovered in a Brussels collection a very curious example from the magic hand — a tiny picture of a girl with a flute, in a Chinese hat (or something very like it), with an elaborate background: not a very attractive work, but Vermeer through and through, and so modern and innovating that were it hung in a Paris or London exhibition to-day it would look out of place only by reason of its power. The picture is seven and a half inches by six and three quarters, and now belongs to Mr. Pierpont Morgan.

After Delft, where we roamed awhile to reconstruct Vermeer's environment, but where, I regret to say, little is known of him, Brussels. For Vermeer there, one must, as in Vienna, visit the home of a nobleman — the Duke of Arenberg — and here again one falls into the hands of a discreet and hospitable butler. The d'Arenberg mansion is in the Rue de la Régence, just under the crest of the fashionable hill. It is open to the picture lover,

like that of Count Czernin, only on certain days. The gallery is small and chiefly Dutch, with a few good pictures in it. The Vermeer is isolated on an easel — the most unmistakable perhaps of all, although so cruelly treated by time, for it is a mass of cracks. Yet through these wounds the beautiful living light of a young girl's face shines — not the girl we have seen at the Hague, but one very like her — her sister, as I conjecture — dressed in the same Eastern trappings, a girl with a strangely blank forehead and eyes widely divided, akin to the type of Madonna dear to Andrea del Sarto. The same girl I think sat for the "Player of the Clavichord" in our National Gallery, to which we soon come. She is a little sad, and a little strange, this child, and only a master could have created her. At Brussels also is one of Vermeer's "Geographers," in the collection of the Vicomte du Bus de Gisegnies; but this I did not then know. And in the Picture Gallery is the conjectural portrait of the young man of which I have written above.

After Brussels, Paris — a good exchange. Paris has one Vermeer in a private collection — Alphonse de Rothschild's — an astronomer, which I have not seen, and one in the Louvre — the beautiful "Dentellière" — before which I have stood scores of times. This too is very small, only a few inches square, but the serene busy head is painted

as largely as if it were in a fresco. The lighting is from the right instead of the left — a very rare experiment with Vermeer.

It is greatly to be regretted that our National Vermeers are not better, because to many readers of this essay they must necessarily be the only pictures from his hand that they can study at all times; and my ecstasies will appear to be foolish. The lady standing at a spinet is a marvel of technique; the paint is applied with all Vermeer's charm of touch; the room is filled with the light of day; there are marvellous details, such as the brass-headed nails of the chair, and the little spot of colour on the head is fascinating; moreover there is an agreeably ingenious scheme of blue, beginning with the gay sky of the landscape on the wall, passing through the delicate tippet of the lady and ending on a soberer note with the covering of the chair. But it is not a picture of which I am fond; it is a *tour de force;* and I think I positively hate the ugly Cupid on the wall, which would be a blot on any man's work, most of all on Vermeer's. One feels that he must have painted this to please the husband of the sitter, who insisted on his pictures being immortalized. Vermeer, left to himself, would have painted a map. The other — the seated girl at the piano — lacks the painter's highest radiance. It is the same girl that we saw in the Brussels picture.

Of the other London Vermeers two (only two!) belong to Mr. Otto Beit. One of these is a tiny "Lady seated at a Spinet," not in the first rank of fascination, but a little masterpiece nevertheless, and the other, "A Lady Writing a Letter," notable for the strong and beautiful painting of the lady's face, foreshortened as she bends over her task. Beside her stands her blue-aproned maid, waiting to take the missive to the door. The table has its usual tapestry and the wall its picture, this time an old master. But the head of the lady is what one remembers — with her white cap and her pearl drops and her happy prosperous countenance.

Mr. Beit's Vermeers are in Belgrave Square: there is another in Hyde Park Gardens, the property of Mrs. Joseph: "The Soldier and the Laughing Girl" it is called. The girl sits at the table with a bright and merry face; the soldier, who has borrowed his red from Peter de Hooch, is in the shade; on the wall is a splendid rugged map of Holland and West Friesland. The picture is paintier than is usual with Vermeer, but very powerful and rich. Mrs. Joseph (I am told) has been forced by the importunities of collectors and dealers to have recourse to a printed refusal to sell this work!

The Vermeer belonging to the King hangs in the private apartments at Windsor, but when I

saw it, it was, by the courtesy of His Majesty's Surveyor of Works of Art, carried into a less sacred room of that vast and imposing fortress for us to look upon. The Court was absent, and workmen were here and there, but one could have told that this was the abode of a monarch, even had one been blindfolded. There was a hush! On a walk of some miles (as it seemed) through dusky passages in which now and then one saw dimly one's face in a slip of a mirror at the corners, we passed other creatures who had some of the outward semblance of human beings; but we were not deceived. They were marked also by a discretion, an authority, beyond ordinary mortality; not the rose, of course, but so near it that one flushed. To have this new experience, for I had never entered a royal castle before, and be on a visit to a Vermeer, was a double privilege. The Vermeer is very charming, but not one of the first rank; and its coating of varnish does not improve it. But it is from the perfect hand none the less, and there is the white Delft jug in it for the eye to return to, like a haven, after every voyage over the canvas.

England also has Vermeer's "Christ in the House of Martha and Mary," which, when it was exhibited in Bond Street some few years ago, divided the experts, but is now, although not confidently, given to our painter by Dr. de Groot. This picture,

which I have not seen, has in the reproduction much of the large easy confidence of the "Diana and her Nymphs" at the Hague. It hangs now in Skelmorlie Castle, and some day I hope to blow a blast outside those Scottish walls and succeed in getting the drawbridge lowered that I may look upon it.

There are nine examples in America to-day (1911). Of these Dr. de Groot reproduces only six, for the other three have come to light since he published. The six which he gives are — Mr. B. Altman's "Woman Asleep" (from the Rodolph Kann Collection), Mr. John G. Johnson's "Lady with the Mandoline," Mrs. Jack Gardner's "Three Musicians," Mr. H. C. Frick's "Singing Lesson," Mr. Pierpont Morgan's "Lady with Flute," and "The Woman with the Water Jug," in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Of these I have seen only Mr. Morgan's, described above. The three new ones are Mr. Morgan's "Lady Writing," Mrs. Huntington's "Lady with Lute," and Mr. Widener's "Lady Weighing Pearls" (or gold), which was exhibited in London early in 1911, and which brings Dr. de Groot's list to thirty-seven. This new Vermeer is not absolutely his best; it is not so great and simple and strong as "The Milkmaid," at the Ryks; it is not so radiant as "The Pearl Necklace," at the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin; it is not so exquisite and miraculous a counterfeit of life as the "Girl's

Head," at the Mauritshuis; nor so enchanting and epoch-making as the "View of Delft," in the same gallery. Those I take to be the artist's four finest pictures. But it is well in his first dozen, and it is vastly better than either of those in the National Gallery.

The new picture represents a woman: one of those placid domestic creatures to whom Vermeer's brush lent a radiance only a gleam of which many a Madonna of the Southern masters would have envied. How little can they have thought, these Delft housewives and maidens, that they were destined for such an immortality! She stands beside a table, as most of Vermeer's women do, and she has a jacket of dark-blue velvet trimmed with fur, and a white handkerchief over her head. The tablecloth also is blue; the curtain is orange. Standing there, she poises in her right hand a pair of goldsmith's scales. On the table is a profusion of pearls (painted with less miraculous dexterity than usual), and a tapestry rug has been tossed there too. Behind her placid, comely head, on the wall (where Vermeer usually places a map), a picture of the Last Judgment hangs, which may or may not be identifiable. (I should doubt if Vermeer introduced it with any ironical intention; that was not his way.) This picture is on a light grey wall. The light comes, of course, from the left, and never did this master of light paint it

— or educe it — more wonderfully. It triumphs through the window and curtain exactly as in "The Pearl Necklace," past the same black mirror. The woman's face, however, has the greatest lustre; from it is diffused a lambency of such beauty that one might almost say that the rest of the picture matters nothing; such a soft and lovely glow were enough. The work is not signed, except with the signature of immanent personality.

Since the discovery of this picture — No. 36 — yet another has been found — a large group of children representing Diana and her nymphs — which Mr. Paterson of Old Bond Street — the discoverer of "Christ in the House of Martha and Mary" — has in his possession. Mr. Paterson is a true Vermeer enthusiast, and not one of those with whom the wish is the father to the thought. His new Vermeer is obviously an early work and is on a larger scale than any of the others: it has weaknesses of drawing and in more than one respect suggests an experimental stage; but one cannot doubt its authorship, and everywhere it is interesting, and here and there exquisite, especially in the figure of the child in the left-hand corner. With this picture the list of practically unquestionable Vermeers reaches thirty-eight.

There remain the one or two on the border-line of authenticity at which I have glanced, and also a signed landscape in the possession of Mr.

Newton Robinson. This, if genuine (as I do not doubt), is Vermeer's only woodland scene, with the exception of those on the walls of other of his pictures, such as that in the National Gallery, for example. It is a soft brown landscape, as little like Vermeer as possible in the mass. But in the detail — particularly in one detail — the signature is corroborated. In the foreground is a little arbour with some young people in it holding a musical party. The most prominent figure is a girl crowned with flowers: and this girl is sheer Vermeer in attitude, in charm, and in technique. The work is, I should guess, juvenile and experimental, but it has many attractions and is of the deepest interest as the thirty-ninth *opus* on the side of certainty.

Vermeer's practically unquestionable output thus totals thirty-nine pictures. Think of the smallness of the harvest. Thirty-nine! That is to say, hardly more for Vermeer's whole career than the Boningtons to be seen in a single London collection — that at Hertford House — where there are thirty-five of his works. And Bonington died at the age of twenty-seven. How many pictures by Bonington exist I know not, but hundreds, I suppose, in all. And Vermeer has only thirty-nine to his name, and lived nearly twice as long, and had eight children to support.

The question that confronts us, the question to

which all these remarks of mine have been leading, then, is, *Where are the others?* Because there must have been others; indeed we know of a few, as I will presently show; but there must have been many others, since Vermeer began to paint when he was young, and painted till the end, and had a working period of, say, twenty-four years — between 1652, when he was twenty, and 1676, when he died. At the modest rate of only four pictures a year this would give him a total of ninety-six pictures, or nearly sixty more than we know of. But putting his output at a lower rate — say at two pictures a year — that would leave us with several still to discover. Of the existence at one time of two if not more of these we have absolute knowledge, gained from the catalogue of the Vermeer sale in Amsterdam in 1696, which I copy from M. Vanzype's pages, together with the prices that they made and his commentary: —

"1. A young girl weighing gold in a little casket. 155 florins.

"2. A milkwoman. 175 fls.

"3. The portrait of the painter, in a room. 45 fls.

"4. A young woman playing the guitar. 70 fls.

"5. A nobleman in his room. 95 fls.

"6. A young woman at the harpsichord, and a young gentleman listening. 30 fls.

"7. A young woman taking a letter from a servant. 70 fls.

"8. A drunken servant, sleeping at a table, 62 fls.

"9. A gay company in a room. 73 fls.

"10. A man and a young woman making music. 81 fls.

"11. A soldier with a young girl who is laughing. 44 fls.

"12. A young lace-maker. 28 fls.

"13. View of Delft. 200 fls.

"14. House at Delft. 72 fls.

"15. View of several houses. 48 fls.

"16. Young woman writing. 63 fls.

"17. Young woman adorning herself. 30 fls.

"18. Young woman at the harpsichord. 42 fls.

"19. A portrait in ancient costume. 36 fls.

"20. and 21. Two pendants. 34 fls."

On the above catalogue M. Vanzype comments as follows: —

"The greater number of these pictures seem to have been recovered.

"The *Milkwoman* [No. 2] is, in all probability, the one hanging for so long in the Six collection.

"The *Young woman playing the guitar* [No. 4] is actually the picture belonging to Mr. Johnson, in Philadelphia. It has been in the Cremer collection at Brussels and in the H. Bischoffsheim collection in London.

"The *Young woman at a harpsichord with a gentleman listening* [No. 6] is no doubt the much-

admired picture at Windsor Castle, where it is one of the treasures and is called *The Music Lesson.* It was sold at Amsterdam at the Roos sale, in 1820, for 340 florins.

"The *Young woman taking a letter from a servant* [No. 7] is at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, under the title *The Letter.* It was bought by the State, through the intervention of the Rembrandt Society and of M. Van Lennep, from M. Messcher Van Vollenhoven for 45,000 florins.

"The *Drunken servant sleeping at a table* [No. 8] is, in all probability, the picture which until just lately belonged to the Kahn collection in Paris, and of the authenticity of which there is no doubt. [This was bought by Mr. Altman in 1910.] Bürger possessed another picture, a servant sleeping in a kitchen, and he believed that this was the work sold in 1696. In his picture the figure is not leaning on the table. It is now in the Widener collection and in it the characteristic qualities of Vermeer are not to be found.

"*A man and a young woman making music* [No. 10] is probably the *Singing Lesson* of the Frick collection at Pittsburg.

"*A soldier with a young girl who is laughing* [No. 11] is Mrs. Joseph's picture in London.

"*The young lace-maker* [No. 12] is the little *chef-d'œuvre* in the Louvre sold for 84 francs at the Muilman sale in 1813; 501 in 1817 at the

Lapeyrière sale; 265 fls. at the Nagel sale in 1851, and in 1870 bought by M. Blockhuyzen, of Rotterdam, for 1270 frs.

"The *View of Delft* [No. 13], if it has no replica, is the picture in the Museum at the Hague, for which 2900 fls. was paid at the Stinstra sale in 1822.

"The *House at Delft* [No. 14] is the *Ruelle* of the Six collection.

"The *Young woman writing* [No. 16] is without doubt the picture in the Beit collection in London. This was in the Héris sale at Brussels in 1857.

"The *Young woman adorning herself* [No. 17] is *The Pearl Necklace* in the Berlin Museum.

"The *Young woman at the harpsichord* [No. 18] is either the picture in the National Gallery or that in the Beit collection, or perhaps that in the Salting collection [now also at the National Gallery].

"It is believed that the portrait in ancient costume [No. 19] is the portrait of the young girl in the Museum at the Hague [my frontispiece].

"[Nos. 20 and 21.] Finally, since at the Hendrik Borgh sale in 1720 one *Astrologer* and its pendant were sold for 160 fls.; and since two *Astrologers* and a pendant were sold at the Neyman sale in 1797 for 270 and 132 fls., it may be deduced that the pendants of the 1696 sale are either the two *Geographers* which belong at the present day to

the Museum at Frankfort and to M. Du Bus de Gisegnies at Brussels; or one only of these and M. Alphonse de Rothschild's *Astronomer*."

To these remarks of M. Vanzype may be added that No. 1 is the picture recently exhibited in London and now in Mr. Widener's collection, and No. 3 is probably the Czernin picture. No. 9 might be the Brunswick painting. This leaves us only with two of the Amsterdam sale pictures to discover — No. 5, *A nobleman in his room*, and No. 15, *View of several houses*. But, of course, certain others which M. Vanzype and I think we have traced may be wholly different. M. Vanzype furthermore remarks: "Other pictures have at certain times been heard of and have since disappeared, notably the '*Dêvideuse*' discussed in 1865 by Bürger and an English connoisseur, which was then in England, but of which no trace has since been found."

Among the thirty-nine that are known, although there are many interiors such as the painter loved, there is, remember, only one woodland scene, only one pure landscape, only one religious subject, only one real portrait, only one street scene, only one kitchen scene, only one purely classical subject, only one family scene. The isolation of these examples fills one with a kind of fury. No painter, and especially no painter with such an interest in the difficulties of his art, such a painter's painter, so

to speak, as Vermeer, and moreover a man with eight children and a clamorous baker — no painter paints only one landscape, especially when the result is so commandingly successful as the "View of Delft." Where are the others? (M. Vanzype has found a replica, but it is not generally accepted.) No painter is satisfied with one attempt at a beautiful façade. Where are the others? (We know there was one other.) No painter paints only one classical subject. Where are the others? (Mr. Paterson's example is only half-classical: classical with a domestic flavour: a family scene in masquerade, to be exact.) No painter paints only one religious subject. Where are the others? No painter paints only one portrait pure and simple as distinguished from portrait and *genre*. M. Vanzype, it is true, claims to have found another; but that would make only two. How indeed would he be allowed to paint no others, when he was Vermeer of Delft and lived in an age of Dutch prosperity and Dutch interest in art? Where are the others? Do you see how one feels — how maddening it is that these bare forty are all, when one knows that there must have been many more?

Vermeer may, of course, have himself destroyed some, as Claude Monet recently destroyed a number of his. But I do not think so; he could not have afforded to, and he was not that kind. No: they still exist somewhere. And the question

where are they brings us back to the wealth of Mr. Pierpont Morgan, for which I was wishing at the beginning of this essay. With it I would furnish expeditions not to discover the Poles north and south, because I care nothing for them; not to conquer the air, because I love too much to feel my feet on this green earth; not to break banks or to finance companies; not to kill the gentle giraffe for America's museums; but simply to hunt among the byways of Northern Europe in the hope of coming upon another work by that exquisite Delft hand. That is how I would spend my money; and incidentally what charming adventures one would have, and what subsidiary treasure one would gather! That would be an expedition worth making, even if the prime object of the search always eluded us.

The Fool's Paradise

THERE is an old picture-shop in the West-Central district of London, notable for the grime of its canvases, in the window of which there is to be seen at this moment — unless a confiding purchaser has just borne it off — a girl's head and bust by some very indifferent Dutch hand, under which is printed on the frame the startling and courageous legend, "The Coral Necklace. By Jan Vermeer, of Delft."

Of course the ascription is inaccurate. Were it accurate and the picture worthy of it, this little shop would be the Mecca of the first art experts of Europe and America, and the dealer would be in the way to affluence; nor does the picture's present owner probably believe in it. But what of some previous possessor who did believe in it — some simple soul who was genuinely convinced that upon his wall hung a portrait by this rarest and most exquisite and radiant of Dutch masters? Do you not envy him his easy credence, his want of fastidious taste? I do.

A little while ago there was a lawsuit — indeed a series of lawsuits — all turning upon the collection

of porcelain left by a wealthy Regent Street merchant, whose hobby was the acquisition of china. As a man in the prime of life he had been a good judge; but as he grew older and his brain weakened his sense of discrimination left him, and it was discovered that his later purchases, so far from being the priceless examples of Dresden and other ware which they were thought to be, were all-but worthless. This naturally was a grief and disappointment to the heirs who were to benefit from the sale; but for us to be sorry for him is as foolish a waste of sympathy as I know. For though there he sat, that old amateur of ceramics, surrounded by the mediocre, yet in that he believed it to be the choicest he was enviable. That belief is the heart of the case, since it is not what things really are, but what one thinks things to be, that is the important matter.

Truth has a slightly different expression for every one. To this aged connoisseur with his decaying faculties her expression was falseness itself, could he have scrutinised it with intelligence, but to his dim eyes it looked like the finest candour, and therefore it was the finest candour. He sunned himself in it, and passing his hands lovingly over the spurious shepherdesses was happy. The point is that he could not have been happier had the porcelain been truly of the rarest and most wonderful.

The Fool's Paradise

I hope it will never be my fortune to visit a picture collector whose walls are hung entirely with obvious copies which he believes to be original, and flagrant daubs which he thinks masterpieces — a collector in short who relies only on the posthumous activity of artists; yet if it is, I hope I shall know how to control myself when he displays his treasures. But of one thing I am certain: that no matter how I may suffer from the concealment of my true feelings as an art lover, I shall experience a genuine affection for my host, and a genuine delight in his transparent, credible nature. Surely the people who live in fool's paradises are the salt of the earth. The man who says of a fine thing, "A fine thing and my own," I can admire, but not necessarily with warmth; the man (he is very common) who says of a fine thing, "A poor thing, but my own," I have very little use for; but the man who says of a poor thing, "A fine thing and my own," him I admire cordially, and could almost embrace.

But about this Vermeer. I cannot get it out of my head, for Vermeer is a painter of whom, as you know, I have made some study, and the thought of any one really sitting down excitedly with this grotesquely misattributed picture in his room, reading the lying label without a qualm, even with pride, scanning the commonplace paint with no twinge of dubiety — it is this thought which beats

me. The man who confidently had the legend printed on the frame must indeed have been a simpleton beyond appraisement — the very briniest salt of the soil. For consider: the copyists, the forgers, may do credible things with Corot, even with Raphael. Every day they are writing David Cox's signature on old water-colours; false ascriptions are the life-blood of too many firms. That is true. But Vermeer — there is only one Vermeer! and yet some man could know enough about Vermeer to wish to have something by him on his wall (modest wish — there are not, as I have been saying, forty known Vermeer canvases in the world), and then be satisfied with this! If ever I longed to meet a freak it is he — not only to examine his bumps, but to abase myself before him. For there is a true philosopher, a really wise man, if you like.

Meanwhile I wish some dramatist with an eye to quaint character, if there be such a one left, would set upon the stage for us a paradisiacal fool such as this — a simple kind of enthusiast without a shred of critical faculty or a drop of guile, whom we might see amiably fondling his geese and deeming them swans. That would give me, for one, great pleasure. Lamb, in his Captain Jackson, approached and skirted the type, but Vermeer's "Coral Necklace" would not have attracted that engaging creature. If Anatole France were a

dramatist and would return to the gentle, smiling mood in which he thought out and built up his Sylvestre Bonnard, he might give us this collector. I can think of no one else; and even he would probably be a little too much inclined to whip something on his back, such a castigator and ridiculer as he is.

Consolers of Genius

I HAVE just added another famous dog to my list. It was a good list before, but it is now richer. It included Matthew Arnold's Geist and Max and Kaiser, George Meredith's Islet, Cowper's Beau, Newton's Diamond, Mrs. Browning's Flush, Mr. Lehmann's Rufus, all Dr. John Brown's many friends, Scott's deerhounds, Mortimer Collins's St. Bernards, Pope's spaniel. I remember only these as I write, but of course there are many others. And to this company enters now "Pomero."

Landor's "Pomero" came to him late in life — in the early 'forties — by which time the old man — he was then nearing seventy but had twenty fairly stormy years left — had settled again in England, his wife and family and most of his sympathies being far away in Italy. At Bath he then lived, making occasional visits to Gore House, and varying the composition of exquisite prose and tender felicitous verse with quarrels and tempests and tempests and reconciliations and tempests and lawsuits. Such then was the possessor of "Pomero" — or, as he would probably have called himself, the proud possession of "Pomero" — of

whom such glimpses as I have had come to me in scraps of letters quoted by Forster in his Life of this noble, troubled, impossible, glorious creature.

Here is one, written by Landor at Warwick, when away from home, or what stood for home at that period — 1844. Pomero had only just arrived from Fiesole; and it is worth remarking that had Landor lived to-day no such fortune would ever have been his, for never would he have survived such explosions of rage as the modern six months' quarantine for imported dogs would have brought on him. (Think of him expressing his views to the custom-house officer at Dover!) "Daily," he wrote, "do I think of Bath and Pomero. I fancy him lying on the narrow window-sill, and watching the good people go to church. He has not yet made up his mind between the Anglican and Roman Catholic; but I hope he will continue in the faith of his forefathers, if it will make him happier."

Pomero, I should say, was a Pomeranian; but let me quote Sir Sidney Colvin's charming sentences upon both man and dog. "With 'Pomero' Landor would prattle in English and Italian as affectionately as a mother with a child. Pomero was his darling, the wisest and most beautiful of his race; Pomero had the brightest eyes and the most wonderful yaller tail ever seen. Sometimes it was Landor's humour to quote Pomero in speech and writing as a kind of sagacious elder brother whose

opinion had to be consulted on all subjects before he would deliver his own. This creature accompanied his master wherever he went, barking 'not fiercely but familiarly' at friend and stranger, and when they came in would either station himself upon his master's head to watch the people passing in the street, or else lie curled up in his basket until Landor, in talk with some visitor, began to laugh, and his laugh to grow and grow, when Pomero would spring up and leap upon and fume about him, barking and screaming for sympathy until the whole street resounded. The two together, master and dog, were for years to be encountered daily on their walks about Bath and its vicinity, and there are many who perfectly well remember them; the majestic old man, looking not a whit the less impressive for his rusty and dusty brown suit, his bulging boots, his rumpled linen, or his battered hat; and his noisy, soft-haired, quick-glancing, inseparable companion."

Landseer, one feels, should have painted them: Dignity and Fidelity, Unreason and Understanding, Lion and Pomeranian. Since he did not, we must go to Forster's extracts from the letters to fill in the picture. Another passage, also in 1844: "Pomero was on my knee when your letter came. He is now looking out of the window; a sad male gossip, as I often tell him. I dare not take him with me to London. He would most

certainly be stolen, and I would rather lose Ipsley or Llanthony. The people of the house love him like a child, and declare he is as sensible as a Christian. He not only is as sensible, but much more Christian than some of those who have lately brought strife and contention into the Church."

Again: "Pomero is sitting in a state of contemplation, with his nose before the fire. He twinkles his ears and his feathery tail at your salutation. He now licks his lips and turns round, which means 'Return mine.' The easterly wind has an evident effect upon his nerves. Last evening I took him to hear Luisina de Sodre play and sing. She is my friend the Countess de Molande's granddaughter and daughter of De Sodre, Minister of Brazil to the Pope a few years ago. Pomero was deeply affected, and lay close to the pedal on her gown, singing in a great variety of tones, not always in time. It is unfortunate that he always will take a part where there is music, for he sings even worse than I do."

So far the letters have been to Forster. Here is a passage from one to Landor's sisters, also in 1844: "Let me congratulate you on the accident that deprives you of your carriage-horses. Next to servants, horses are the greatest trouble in life. Dogs are blessings, true blessings. Pomero, who sends his love, is the comfort of my solitude and the delight of my life. He is quite a public

character here in Bath. Everybody knows him and salutes him. He barks aloud at all familiarly, not fiercely. He takes equal liberties with his fellow-creatures, if indeed dogs are more his fellow-creatures than I am. I think it was St. Francis de Sales who called birds and quadrupeds his sisters and brothers. Few saints have been so good-tempered, and not many so wise."

For twelve years Pomero lived to make his master (his servant) happy or less unhappy, and then he died. That is the tragic thing — the brief life of these loyal devotees. It is not right, not fair, that so much love and energy should so quickly pass away. Many sensitive persons refuse for this reason to keep dogs at all. That, I think, is going too far, but I can understand it. Life at its longest for a human being is so brief and so fraught with disappointment and disillusion that, at least, one feels, the span of the most faithful and satisfying friends that man knows might have been made commensurate. . . . Pomero, as I have said, was Landor's for twelve years, and then he died. Writing to Forster on the 10th of March, 1856, the old man — he was eighty-one — tells the news: "Pomero, dear Pomero, died this evening at about four o'clock. I have been able to think of nothing else. . . ."

A few days later he wrote again: "Everybody in this house grieves for Pomero. The cat lies

day and night upon his grave, and I will not disturb the kind creature, though I want to plant some violets upon it, and to have his epitaph placed around his little urn: —

> O urna! nunquam sis tuo eruta hortulo:
> Cor intus est fidele, nam cor est canis.
> Vale, hortule! aeternumque, Pomero! vale.
> Sed, si datur, nostri memor."

Eighty-one though he was, Landor had still nine years before him — years of trouble, and fury, and exile. Not till 1864 did he meet Pomero again.

Pomero had been Landor's confidant and delight for five years when, in 1849, there came to one of the most illustrious of his contemporaries — and a critic of the world not less impatient than himself, but how different! — a similar companion. It was not, it is true, a Pomeranian, but a dog none the less.

The news was thus broken by one of the most remarkable women of all time to, as it happens, the same friend who had been first told of the arrival of Pomero. "O Lord!" she writes, wilfully, characteristically as ever, "O Lord! I forgot to tell you I have got a little dog, and Mr. C. has accepted it with an amiability! To be sure, when he comes down gloomy in the morning, or comes in wearied from his walk, the infatuated little beast dances round him on his hind legs as I ought to do and can't; and he feels flattered and

surprised by such unwonted capers to his honour and glory." So wrote Jane Welsh Carlyle to John Forster, on the 11th of December, 1849.

Sixteen years later the writer of that letter died suddenly in her carriage in Hyde Park, and thus ended a life of heroic vivacity. Her husband, deprived for ever of the power of sustained work, difficult enough when he had her service and intelligence within call, spent a few months in his early bereavement in collecting and arranging and annotating her marvellous correspondence; and one does not envy him his feelings as he did it. Coming to the note to Forster which I have quoted, he thus introduced it: "Poor little Nero, the dog, must have come this winter, or 'Fall' (1849)? Railway guard (from Dilberoglue, Manchester) brought him in one evening late. A little Cuban (Maltese? and otherwise mongrel) shock, mostly white — a most affectionate, lively little dog, otherwise of small merit, and little or no training. Much innocent sport there arose out of him; much quizzical ingenuous preparation of me for admitting of him: 'My dear, it's borne in upon my mind that I'm to have a dog,' etc., etc., and with such a look and style! We had many walks together, he and I, for the next ten years; a great deal of small traffic, poor little animal, so loyal, so loving, so naïve and true with what of dim intellect he had! Once, perhaps in his third year

here, he came pattering upstairs to my garret; scratched duly, was let in, and brought me (literally) the 'gift of a horse' (which I had talked of needing)! Brought me, to wit, a letter hung to his neck, inclosing on a saddler's card the picture of a horse, and adjoined to it a cheque for £50 — full half of some poor legacy which had fallen to her! Can I ever forget such a thing? I was not slave enough to take the money; and got a horse next year, on the common terms — but all Potosi, and the diggings new and old, had not in them, as I now feel, so rich a gift!"

These three volumes of Mrs. Carlyle's indomitably gay correspondence, laughing at her crosses, making light of her disappointments, extracting whatever of merriment or sunshine was possible, and never with any trace of self-commendation or consciousness of heroism: and a woman too who must have known that, given a fair chance, which she never had, she would have shone in her own way with hardly less brilliancy than her bear; who must have known she was worth petting, and considering, and adoring rightly — these three volumes of brilliant good-humour against odds, with the dour, intolerant, solitary widower re-living the irrecoverable past as he read them over and edited them, counting his lost opportunities on every page, are surely as tragic a work as literature knows. But Nero is pawing at the desk. The note con-

tinues: "Poor Nero's last good days were with us at Aberdour, in 1859. Twice or thrice I flung him into the sea there, which he didn't at all like; and in consequence of which he even ceased to follow me at bathing time, the very strongest measure he could take — or pretend to take. For two or three mornings accordingly I had seen nothing of Nero, but the third or fourth morning, on striking out to swim a few yards, I heard gradually a kind of swashing behind me; looking back, it was Nero out on voluntary humble partnership — ready to swim with me to Edinburgh, or to the world's end, if I liked."

Pomero, as I said, lived for twelve years with his whirlwind adorer. Nero had a shorter life with that strange Scotch couple only by a few months. This is the end of Carlyle's note: "Fife had done his mistress, and still more him, a great deal of good. But, alas, in Cook's grounds here, within a month or two a butcher's cart (in her very sight) ran over him neck and lungs: all winter he wheezed and suffered; 'Feb. 1st, 1860,' he died (prussic acid, and the doctor obliged at last!). I could not have believed my grief then and since would have been the twentieth part of what it was — nay, that the want of him would have been to me other than a riddance. Our last midnight walk together (for he insisted on trying to come), Jan. 31st, is still painful to my thought. 'Little

dim, white speck, of Life, of Love, Fidelity, and Feeling, girdled by the Darkness as of Night Eternal!' Her tears were passionate and bitter, but repressed themselves, as was fit, I think, the first day. Top of the garden, by her direction, Nero was put under ground. A small stone tablet with date she also got, which, broken by careless servants, is still there — a little protected now."

It is there still, but few visitors to that gloomy Chelsea house, where two geniuses, a man and woman, failed sufficiently to subdue and blend their individualities for so many years, ever walk down the garden to see it. Underneath are the remains of one who could neither read nor write nor frame systems, but who lived the only successful life of the three.

An American Hero

WHO was William Allen Richardson? I once asked. Since the publication of the volume of essays in which the problem was so tiresomely propounded many letters have reached me, each with its own solution. All are different; and their differences show how important it was that a warrior for truth should come forward and fling the question in the world's face. For the growth of legend and myth that has been endangering the fame of this noble deviser of an orange-hearted rose was becoming too rampant. Let me, therefore, who asked the question, now answer it; for I know. By dint of careful pruning I have removed the apocryphal, and the truth remains. William Allen Richardson was —

But you must permit me first to narrate some of the experiences of an essayist who has the temerity to indulge in interrogation marks.

The first letter I received — almost immediately after the publication of the book — gave so lucid an account of William Allen Richardson that I began to think I had made too much of the mystery. "Do you really want to know about William Allen

Richardson?" it began; and then this story was told: "William Allen Richardson and his wife loved roses, and the ambition of their lives was to raise an orange-coloured rose. At last they succeeded, and they called the treasure 'William and Ellen Richardson,' a rather cumbersome title, but meaning much to these two. Alas, the printer would have none of this sentiment — hence 'William Allen Richardson.'"

I cannot say that this narrative satisfied me; but there was nothing in it to make one violently sceptical. Why should not William and Ellen have lived this idyllic rose-growing life? Why should not their names have been thus intertwined for ever, even if a little ungallantly? I had seen barges on the Thames called "William and Ellen," I was sure; why not roses? I therefore went about saying that I now knew the whole history of William Allen Richardson, and the story was not doubted.

But then arrived an anonymous post card with the Paddington postmark: "I am of no importance and my brother is of no importance, but William Allen Richardson was the brother of my brother's handy man. (At least he said so.)" What of William and Ellen after that? For the time, at any rate, the narrative of their fragrant union passed from my repertory.

That post card will give you an idea of the

lightness with which this matter can be approached. I do not mean that the communication in itself is frivolous, for, though easy in tone, it yet states the case briefly and clearly; the lightness that I complain of is in the attitude of the writer's brother towards this tremendous problem. Here he was, with his brother's handy man claiming to be the own brother of the great William Allen Richardson, and yet doing no more (apparently) than treating it as a myth — never investigating — never, in short, really caring. Now if I had a brother whose handy man was —— But this is boasting, self-approval; and complacent people conscious of their own rectitude rarely get at the truth.

Other correspondents followed, all strangers to me, and each with a pet theory. One had it that William Allen Richardson had been gardener to a rose-loving duke. Another, that he was a Scotchman who had gone to France, to manage the Ducher nursery. Another, that he was the American editor of a horticultural journal. Then came another more circumstantial story, from a lady in Yorkshire. "I was taught by a dear old country vicar (himself an enthusiastic rose-grower and close friend of Dean Hole) that W. A. Richardson was one of the Quaker firm of Richardson, who had a place near Newry in the north of Ireland." This so chimed in with my own Quakerish suspicions, as expressed in the original essay, that I was in-

clined to think we might really be at home at last; but meanwhile an American missive was on its way from Louisville, Kentucky, and when it arrived I saw at once that here was Veritas naked and unashamed.

A certain statesman who had taken much interest in the matter will be amused to read the Louisville communication. "I have often," he wrote to me, "wondered, and occasionally asked, who W. A. R. was, and have been at times impatient that people should be content to live on without knowing. Now I would almost rather not know, having been disappointed for so long." He went on to say that he suspected W. A. R. to be an American. Well, he was right. Sagacious and far-seeing as ever, he now has another opportunity of pointing to a fulfilled conjecture; for there is no doubt (since I have had corroboration from another transatlantic source) that the following letter is gospel.

The writer, Mr. W. R. Belknap, roundly states himself to be William Allen Richardson's nephew. He continues: "William Allen Richardson was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on February 20, 1819. When he was but two years old, his father moved to Lexington, Kentucky, where he resided until his death, in October, 1892. William Allen Richardson married Miss Mary Short, daughter of Charles Wilkins Short, the botanist, who pursued

his favourite studies of botany and horticulture at his country place, Hayfield, some five miles south-west of Louisville. With this congenial companionship, Mr. W. A. Richardson established himself in an adjoining place, Ivywood, and became much interested in the cultivation and propagation of roses. He imported a good many, and in this way became acquainted by correspondence with Madame Ducher (or she may have been called Veuve Ducher), at Lyons, France, who was especially interested in a rose which he sent her of a pale yellow colour, and she wrote Mr. Richardson that she had a sport from this rose in her own garden, which, if successful in propagation, she would name for him; hence the name which has interested you as applying to the beautiful copperish-yellow rose. . . . Mr. Richardson lived until 1892 in his country home near here, and would have enjoyed, if he might have foreseen, the interest which his namesake has aroused. . . ."

And now we know. The secret is out, and the rose will smell no less sweet for it, nor climb less carelessly, nor refresh the eye less graciously. But I adjure America to be more proud of this feather in her cap. I do not suggest that William Allen Richardson should have a monument, for he has one in every right garden more beautiful than marble and very likely more enduring than bronze;

but his name should be so deeply cut upon the roll of honour that no one need ever have to ask my question again.

But what a blow to that foolish romantic anecdote about Ellen!

Mr. Hastings

HAD it not been for the trenchant pen of his cousin, Anthony Ashley Cooper, the first Lord Shaftesbury, we should know nothing of Mr. Hastings; but as it happens, a portrait of Mr. Hastings being painted, the Earl was amused to pit his pen against the brush of the artist and append the result to the picture. So that Mr. Hastings used to hang on the wall at Wimborne St. Giles's, near Cranbourn, in Dorset (one of the Shaftesbury seats), doubly limned. Where he is to-day I know not; but the Earl's words remain and are accessible. I take them in the form which follows from the "Connoisseur" for Thursday, 14 August, 1755, and I may in passing say that in turning over the leaves of this leisurely little breakfast-table companion it was not a little disquieting to think what good papers they had in London one hundred and fifty-six years ago, before the days of amalgamation.

As to the portrait of Mr. Hastings, I have seen an engraving of it in one of Hutchins's Dorsetshire books, and it is a crude enough thing — a little odd old man, with a pointed beard, sharp

eyes, and a long staff in his right hand — not so much a patriarch's staff as a surveyor's pole. Nothing in it to suggest that he loved spaniels, for example, or knew the best thing to do with a disused pulpit. Yet he did.

Now for the shrewd and cryptic statesman who first made the admirable remark (since given to others) that "Wise men are of but one religion," adding to the lady who inquired what that was, "Wise men never tell." He begins thus: "In the year 1638 lived Mr. Hastings; by his quality son, brother, and uncle to the Earls of Huntingdon. He was . . . low, very strong, and very active; of a reddish flaxen hair. His clothes always green cloth, and never all worth (when new) five pounds. His house was perfectly of the old fashion, in the midst of a large Park well stocked with deer; and near the house rabbits to serve his kitchen; many fish-ponds; great store of wood and timber; a bowling-green in it, long but narrow, full of high ridges, it being never levell'd since it was plough'd. They used round sand bowls; and it had a banqueting house like a stand, built in a tree." — The mansion no longer stands in its entirety. It was pulled down, with the exception of two wings, at the beginning of the last century. One of these wings, however, contains the kitchen, and gives ample evidence of the hospitality which, as we shall see, was practised there.

Mr. Hastings "kept all manner of sport hounds, that ran buck, fox, hare, otter, and badger. And hawks, long and short winged. He had all sorts of nets for fish. He had a walk in the New Forest, and the manor of Christ Church. This last supplied him with red deer, sea and river fish And indeed all his neighbours' grounds and royalties were free to him, who bestowed all his time on these sports, but what he borrowed to caress his neighbours' wives and daughters; there being not a woman in all his walks, of the degree of a yeoman's wife or under, and under the age of forty, but it was extremely her fault if he was not intimately acquainted with her. This made him very popular; always speaking kindly to the husband, father, or brother, who was, to boot, very welcome to his house whenever he came." ("Popular" is a good word, so good, in this connexion, that one has to pause a little to savour it.) Thinking of him thus occupied, if ever, you would say, an old, whimsical bachelor was portrayed, he is portrayed here. But you would be wrong, for Mr. Hastings was married. It was his wife who brought him Woodlands, and she did not die till 1638, when he was eighty-seven. They had, moreover, a son. Lord Shaftesbury, who was something of a cynic, suppressed this detail. It amused him to eliminate Mrs. Hastings.

His lordship goes on to describe the free-and-

easy (and, on the face of it, wifeless) character of Mr. Hastings' house. "A house not so neatly kept as to shame him or his dirty shoes: the great hall strow'd with marrow bones, full of hawks' perches, hounds, spaniels, and terriers; the upper side of the hall hung with foxskins of this and the last year's killing; here and there a polecat intermixt; game-keepers' and hunters' poles in great abundance. The parlour was a large room as properly furnished. On a great hearth paved with brick lay some terriers, and the choicest hounds and spaniels. Seldom but two of the great chairs had litters of young cats in them, which were not to be disturbed, he having always three or four attending him at dinner, and a little white stick of fourteen inches lying by his trencher, that he might defend such meat as he had no mind to part with to them." (One does not feel much room for a Mrs. Hastings here. She kept her own quarters, I imagine.)

I should like to see a picture of old Mr. Hastings at his meals — with all his animals about him and his hand holding his little white stick. Steinlen, who designed that fine poster for Nestlé's milk — the cats clamouring for the little girl's breakfast — could draw the animals; but for the little old gentleman, with his red hair and green clothes and great age, you would want a Dendy Sadler or Stacy Marks.

The description of the house continues: "The windows (which were very large) served for places to lay his arrows, cross-bows, stone-bows, and other such like accoutrements. The corners of the room full of the best-chose hunting and hawking poles. An oyster table at the lower end, which was of constant use twice a day all the year round, for he never failed to eat oysters, before dinner and supper, through all seasons; the neighbouring town of Poole supply'd him with them. The upper part of the room had two small tables and a desk, on the one side of which was a Church Bible, and on the other the Book of Martyrs. On the tables were hawks' hoods, bells, and such like; two or three old green hats, with their crowns thrust in so as to hold ten or a dozen eggs, which were of a pheasant kind of poultry, he took much care of and fed himself. Tables, dice, cards, and boxes were not wanting. In the hole of the desk were store of tobacco-pipes that had been used." — Mr. Hastings must have been one of the earliest of the smokers, since he was born as far back as 1551.

"On one side of this end of the room was the door of a closet wherein stood the strong beer and the wine, which never came thence but in single glasses, that being the rule of the house exactly observ'd. For he never exceeded in drink or permitted it." In another account of Mr. Hastings

his iron rule with regard to liquor was suggested to have caused much unhappiness to his guests. And I must admit that there seems to be something wrong in a house where you may not see the bottle, much less handle it. But, on the other hand, it is such unexpected whims and unreasonableness that are the life-blood of these old originals. Any dull creature can be reasonable.

Now comes a priceless touch: "On the other side was the door into an old chapel, not used for devotion. The pulpit, as the safest place, was never wanting of an cold chine of beef, venison pasty, gammon of bacon, or great apple pye, with thick crust, extremely baked." "Never wanting" is splendid. One longs to know more of the service of this house — of the cook who fell in so complacently with such a master's needs and ways. "Never wanting!"

Like Bishop Corbet's fairies, Mr. Hastings was of the old profession. "His table cost him not much, though it was good to eat at. His sports supplied all but beef and mutton, except Fridays, when he had the best salt fish (as well as other fish) he could get; and was the day his neighbours of best quality most visited him. He never wanted a London pudding, and always sung it in with 'My part lies therein-a.'" "He always sung it in." Here lies an old custom indeed, dead, I suppose, as Mr. Hastings himself and all his

spaniels and kittens. Who sings in a pudding to-day? And, indeed, what pudding is worth singing in? Not the rice which I had yesterday, at any rate.

And so we come to the end: "He was well-natured but soon angry. . . . He lived to be a hundred; never lost his eyesight, but always wrote and read without spectacles; and got on horseback without help. Until past four score he rode to the death of a stag as well as any." He was buried in Horton church in 1650 at the age of ninety and nine, and England will never know anything like him again. Gone are such spacious days and ways; gone such idiosyncrasy and humour. Only, I imagine, on the bowling-greens are Mr. Hastings' characteristics to be still observed; for our old devotees of that leisurely contest, that most pacific warfare, cannot in their attitudes, gestures and expressions differ much from the Squire of Woodlands. Just so did he, three hundred years ago, contort and twist his frame, as he watched his bowl's career and bent every nerve and fibre to influence it to swerve at the last dying moment on the jack between his two rivals. These elemental anxieties do not change.

Thoughts on Tan

IN my search for the curious, which I hope that nothing will ever satiate, I came recently upon this advertisement at the end of a not too respectable comic paper: —

> HANDSOME MEN are slightly sunburnt. "Sunbronze" gives this tint. Harmless. Detection impossible. Makes men really handsome. Society Lady writes: — "Sunbronze is wonderful, charming, and genuine." 1s. 1½d., etc.

When I read it first I laughed. Then I cut it out. Then I began not to laugh; and I am not sure now that one ought not to weep. . . .

We were considering earlier in this volume a certain kind of fool's paradise — the paradise which surrounds the collector-fool who genuinely believes his geese to be swans. That amiable simpleton deceived no one; he was merely soothingly and caressingly self-deceived to the top of his bent through a heaven-sent want of true taste. Compared with him the man who deliberately rubs a mixture on his face in order to induce his friends to believe that he has been much in the sun when

he has not is complex indeed — for he is deceiving every one else without for an instant deceiving himself at all. For that is my reading of that advertisement. I do not accept its face value; I do not believe that it is bought by men in order to render themselves more attractive to the fair. My reading is that it is bought by men (and perhaps by women too: you observe the testimony of the Society Lady?) in order that it may lend colour to their assertion that they have been fashionably or expensively holiday-making when they have not.

But why pretend? you say. Ah! you are perhaps well-to-do. Nothing keeps you at home; or even if it did, it would not cause you shame. But can you not believe that there are others? . . .

We feel that we are greater than we know

— as Wordsworth says. That is an exalted mood. A commoner experience would perhaps be expressed thus: —

We hope you'll think us greater than we are.

That aspiration, at any rate, is at the bottom of the success of such a lotion as this; and it is prevalent.

A full inquiry into this foible of poor human nature would need a volume; nor could I carry it out. Something of the minute scientific method of Professor Sully would be needed, with a considerable infusion of Thackeray added, and a leaven of pity, too.

Pity indeed. For though sheer brazen impudence and a determined lady-killing may resort to this strange bottle, this phial of mockery, yet I seem to see it being smuggled into simpler homes too. The poor clerk, for example, who is forced by sheer poverty to spend his week or fortnight in his London home, and by sheer shame to spend it almost *perdu;* reading the paper in bed, smoking his pipe in his back yard, helping with the children, playing pool at night over his glass in the public-house at the corner — how would he feel when he returned to work at the end of the period and had to confess that he had been nowhere? That is the point to consider, for few of us are great, and he is very small indeed. Amid triumphant stories of Margate and Southend, Yarmouth and Southsea, Brighton and even Guernsey, where would he be if he told the truth? Nowhere. And what fun is it not to be anywhere? Don't you see? And so do you blame him if he spends 1s. 1½d., and anoints his countenance with a little of this delusive fluid on the morning of his return, and, strong in its testimony, talks vaguely but sufficiently of Herne Bay? Do you blame him? You must be a devil of a fellow if you do.

In a way he is entirely justified, for there is no doubt that he is gaining self-respect by losing it: that is to say, he would feel almost too paltry if he

had to confess to the real squalid economy of his fortnight. And it is not good to feel too paltry.

But the wish to be thought more fashionable than one is, is not confined to the respectable poor — the poor, that is, who are forced to make something of a show: surely the least enviable class of all; the poor, in other words, who have to forego all the privileges of being poor. There is another class — Major Pendennis was at the head of it — who must intrigue a little too, if they are not to be too miserable. I remember a little man who had a room in Jermyn Street and lived in his Club; it was his habit to disappear for a fortnight or so every 11th of August, and reappear very brown and very vocal of the moors. His colour was genuine — no 1s. 1½d. bottle, but the Lord of Light himself had conferred it; yet not by beams that fell in Yorkshire or Scotland, but on Brighton's pier. How, then, did his narrative of triumph in the butts carry conviction? What was his particular "Sunbronze"? He wore in the ribbon of his hat a little row of grouse feathers.

And that possibly is what one has to remember — that "Sunbronze" takes many forms — more than I know, or you know, or ever shall know, however extensive our knowledge may be at this moment. For we all "Sunbronze" a little; at least if not quite all, nearly all. We nearly all hope you'll think us greater than we are.

On Leaving One's Beat

WHEN I am going for a long railway journey I always buy a number of papers associated with walks of life as far as possible removed from my own. Then the time passes easily. The ordinary papers one reads too quickly; the exorbitant require attention — they open the door to new worlds. I do not mean to suggest that one could go so far as to find entertainment in the Financial Supplement to the "Times" — that is too much; but the organs of dog-fancying, yachting, cricket, prize-fighting, the police, estate agents, licensed victuallers — these are sufficiently unusual and concentrated to be entertaining if they are really studied. Their exclusiveness, their importance, I particularly like: the suggestion they throw out that in this world all is vanity save their own affairs (as indeed it is). Such self-centredness is very exhilarating.

But the best fun of all is to be found in the stage and variety-hall papers. Not only are they the most amusing, but also the most human, for the sock and buskin have a way of forcing the heart to the sleeve. Limelight does more than all

the sun of the tropics to bring emotion to the surface without shame; and it thus comes about that the periodicals of the players are full of refreshment to the cabined and reserved. Reading one of them the other day, I found in the advertisement columns (which should never be neglected) the following rich feast of opportunity, on which I have been ruminating ever since: —

"The Angel of His Dreams."

WANTED, to rehearse April 19th, Summer Tour, Autumn if suitable, Dashing Leading Lady; must have power, pathos, intensity, and be capable of strong character work. Emotional Juvenile Lady, with pathos and intensity (look 17 in first Act; state if sing). Handsome wardrobe essential in both cases. Clever Emotional Child Actress, over 14, look 9; own speciality. Tall, Robust, Aristocratic Heavy Man; Aris. Old Man (Small Double and S.M.). Young Char. Juv. Man (Small Double); Bright Low Comedian (short).

References, lowest summer terms, and photos essential.

— There is an advertisement if you like! Did you ever hear of so many strange wants? I certainly never did; nor ever did I hear of so many vacancies that I could not myself do anything towards filling. For, as a rule, one feels one could

make some kind of a show in most capacities — one could maintain for a little while the illusion of being a gentleman's butler, or even a gardener, a sleeping partner, an addresser of envelopes, a smart traveller, an election agent, a sub-editor, or any of the things that are so frequently advertised for, supposing one to have applied for the post and have been engaged. But how begin to be a "Young Char. Juv. Man (Small Double)"? That leaves me utterly at sea. And "S.M.," what is that?

It was while pondering upon these matters that I realized what an excellent thing it would be for many of us whose imagination is weak, and whose sympathetic understanding is therefore apt to break down, if we could now and then completely change our beat. Many a hidebound, intolerant, self-satisfied Puritan do I know who, forced into such a touring company as this, compelled by sheer adversity to assume the habit of a "Small Double and S.M.," or a "Bright Low Comedian," would come out of the ordeal far sweeter and fitter to play his part in the human drama, however he may have disappointed the promoters of "The Angel of His Dreams." We remain — it is largely the fault of the shortness of life and the need of pence — too much in our own grooves. We are too ignorant of what we can really do.

That advertisement came from an organ of the

legitimate Stage. Obviously. In a less classic and more intimate music-hall paper, which I bought at the same time, I found the charming announcement of the birth of a son to a North of England Valentine Vox. After stating the event — "The wife of 'Baddow' (ventriloquist) of a son" — it went on thus: — "Both doing well. Baddow takes this opportunity of thanking the managers and agents who so kindly transferred, altered, and rearranged dates, so that I played places near and was able to stay in Liverpool for this event." There is something very engaging in the *naïveté*, pride and pleasure of that statement. It contains so much of the warm-heartedness of the variety stage, where money and sympathy equally come in easily and go out easily. Baddow's suppression of his Christian name, or even initial, I like: his satisfaction in having reached a position where both are negligible, together with the suspicion that he is aware that the advertisement would be of less value if the star style were tampered with. I like also his complacency as a parent of some importance. And then there is in it too the new evidence of the kindliness of those in power, all working together to keep the properly anxious ventriloquist near at home; and finally the really adorable transition, indicating real emotion, from the somewhat stilted if imposing third person to the familiar first.

The good, affectionate Baddow! I hope mother and son are still doing well, and that the son will grow up to be a comfort to his parents, and as a ventriloquist not unworthy of his father (though never surpassing him), and a delight to audiences.

The Deer-Park

AFTER too many years I found myself last week once again in the first deer-park I ever saw; and the change was only in me. The same beautiful creatures were there, of the dappled variety, feeding in little groups, standing motionless as a stranger approached, and moving across the open or amid the trees of the avenue with the silent, timid curiousness of their kind. The sun was golden through cracks in the heavy clouds, and the deer's soft dapplings shone in its light, while when they moved in any number they twinkled, glittered, almost smouldered.

Now and then an old stag, with antlers so broad and branching that they seemed not his at all, but a borrowed head-dress assumed almost as if for a charade, would pass with dignity and extreme deliberation from one group to another; now and then a fawn would trot up to its mother on legs of such slender delicacy that their serviceableness for anything but the most exquisite decoration seemed impossible; and twice there were royal battles between young stags, whose horns met in a terrifying clash and clatter like spears on shields.

These contests were interesting not only for the attack and counter-attack, but for the conduct of the older stags, two of which at once approached very slowly, but full of purpose, to act as referees, and, if necessary, to interfere. It was precisely the same in each engagement, although they were half a mile apart. The second was the more exciting, for once or twice the referee had to break in, and once with a furious rush one of the fighters charged his opponent clean into the river, down a steep bank, and then jumped in after him and continued the battle. All this we saw as we sat under one of the lime-trees in the beautiful avenue, and I remembered, as I sat there, that just such sounds as these — the rattling of antlers in concussion — we had been accustomed to hear years and years ago when we were children and lodged in a cottage by the park gates. Certainly I had not heard it since, but gradually it grew more and more familiar, rising to the surface of consciousness after this so long submersion.

What the life of a park deer is I have no notion, nor was there anyone to ask; but since that is thirty-five years ago at the least, it is improbable that any of these lovely creatures, so rare and dainty and fragile as to be almost unreal, are the same that used to thrill us at that distant day; yet I repeat there was no visible change whatever, save in me. Everything else was the same — the

footpaths; the lime avenue; the oak deer-fence, still often in need of repair; the large house, once so awe-inspiring and now so ugly; the church by the Scotch firs; the red sand of the road; the curious house with the bas-relief of a hog on a plate of Sussex iron near the church — but most of all the deer, just as fairylike, just as thrilling, as ever, and moving exactly in their old mysterious ways. I was glad I had seen so few deer since, and none dappled. I will not see these again for some time, just to keep that emotion of surprise and delight green and sweet.

Considering how many deer-parks England has — though far from enough — it is remarkable that the sight of deer should be such an epoch in the life of the ordinary person. Yet the very word deer-park gives me a quickening of the pulse, and, I hope, always will. I came away wondering what Jamrach or Cross would want for a pair; but I have lost the wish for them. They should be kept more extraordinary than that. They must remain an event. I am even sorry for villagers who live near deer-parks; while having so much, they miss so much.

The other creature from romance that I group with the deer as making a red-letter day for a child, and indeed for some of us who are older, is the peacock. Now and then, but how rarely, there would be an excursion to some great mansion.

The passage from room to room amid gilt furniture and ancestral portraits was an excitement, no doubt; but the most memorable sight of all was the blue breast of the peacock on the terrace-wall, caught through one of the diamond panes. Until I moved to London and contracted the Kew Gardens Sunday habit, I suppose that I had not seen ten peacocks in my life, and now again I see them ordinarily not once a year; but a little while ago I visited a poet who lives in an old house in the very heart of the country, and there I found many peacocks. They walked proudly and affectedly about the garden, they sat on the walls and on the roofs of the out-buildings, they screamed at each other and spread their tails. The complete skin of one that had died burned blue in the hall.

I expressed the usual commonplace as to their destructiveness of flowers.

"To me," said the poet, "they *are* flowers. One cannot have both, so I have peacocks."

From this, my first and latest deer-park, which has but a handful of cottages near it, we walked to the market town, a mile and a half away, and there I sought in vain for the little toy and sweet shop where all those years ago my first bow and arrow was bought. I know just where it stood, but new and imposing premises occupy its place. The bow was given me by one of those bachelor

visitors who have it in their power at extraordinarily small cost to glorify the existence of small boys and emparadise the world. It is among the deeper tragedies that one can never receive one's first bow and arrow again.

The Rarities

I HAVE been staying in the remote country with an aristocrat, by which, of course, I mean not a man with two motor-cars, or a man with illustrious quarterings, but one through whose garden runs a trout-stream. I used to think that the possession of a cedar alone conferred aristocracy, and I still think that in some measure it does; but a stream with trout in it. . . . ! Moreover, this friend of mine has a cedar too.

It is odd how late in life one does some of the most desirable things. Here am I, who, ever since I can remember, have been longing to be idle with a book in a chair beside running water; yet not till last week did I find the conditions perfect. The sun was hot, yet not too hot; the book did not matter, yet was not despicable, and once a peacock butterfly settled upon the open page, and this justified in an instant the existence of author, publisher, paper-maker, printer, binder, and bookseller; the air was filled not only with the pretty whispering burble of the current, but also with the plashing of a fountain in its marble basin and the steady descent of water through a sluice;

sweet scents came and went with the gentle breeze, and one had but to lift the eyes to see phloxes and dahlias in all their rich glory. And once — but that is too wonderful an experience to be mentioned without more ceremony.

Just as one man's meat is another man's poison, so is one man's commonplace another's phenomenon. To an Englishman, for example, in Dieppe it is nothing to read that a swallow-tailed butterfly has been seen in England, because on the cliffs between Dieppe and Le Puy swallow-tails are as prevalent as garden-whites with us. But what a thrill for the English schoolboy with his net to see one in his native meadows! Again, it is nothing to a gamekeeper to watch a family of foxes at play in the early morning; but it would be an unforgettable spectacle to a town dweller. And I daresay that there are readers of these lines in Norfolk who are as accustomed to the sight of kingfishers as I who live far from water am to that of rooks; but to me kingfishers have appeared so seldom that they are like angels' visits and mark the years. I remember one on the Rother, near Midhurst, in 1884; another near Abingdon in 1889; another at Burford Bridge in 1890; and a fourth in the valley between Rievaulx and Helmsley in 1894. That is my total — four kingfishers in quite a long and not indolent life, which includes at least two separate weeks on the Avon devoted

to the search for this bird — not the frequented Avon either, but the Avon's quieter parts such as one finds near the Combertons and about Harington Weir.

At least that was my total until last week. But now I must add a fifth, for as I was sitting by this little stream, thinking of nothing, quietly ruminative and happily receptive, suddenly a jewel darted through the air, and, burning bright against the sombre depths of a yew, disappeared again. Almost before I had realized its presence my fifth kingfisher was gone; but the day was made perfect by the flash.

And had I sat on I might have had even greater luck, for a fortnight ago, while my friend was standing motionless on his bridge, an otter climbed out of the water close by and strolled along the bank, bright-eyed and inquisitive. Luck is the only word; and, as I once wrote elsewhere, it is a kind of luck which goes entirely by favour of the gods. I have it not. The only otter I ever saw was at the Zoo; and incidentally I might add that the otter is the only animal in the Zoo for which (with the exception of the mice) one does not feel sorry. He seems so content; and has so much of his "native pewter" (so to speak) to revel in; and is so continuously and rapturously alive, making the best of both worlds — water and land. Whenever I look at him — and he is three or four strong just

now — I again realize that one of the most satisfactory memories I can indulge is that on the single occasion on which I joined an otter hunt nothing was killed.

It was seventeen years ago. The pack had come all the way to Sussex from Wales, accompanied by an indefatigable owner, who illustrated, curiously, pathetically, almost tragically, the hold that the chase can exert upon an English gentleman. For he was a ruin: he was paralyzed below the waist, and had the use only of one arm; but strapped securely on a tried and faithful pony, he was able to direct and follow the hunt. It was a strange sight: the old placid pony tugging at the lush grass, while its crippled rider, in the grip of the passion of pursuit, yelled like a demon. Hour after hour this stricken centaur patrolled the banks and urged on his hounds with shouts and cries pouring from his twisted lips. Not an otter-haunted stream in England but knew him! I often think of him and wonder.

Dipping the other day in that most agreeable of recent autobiographies, *The Reminiscences of Albert Pell*, I opened once again at his story of Sir John Lawes' otters, and, re-reading it, I felt more than ever relieved that that one otter-hunt of my youth ended without bloodshed. "An otter," wrote Mr. Pell, who knew most things about English woodlands and streams, "is a de-

lightfully amusing pet, and extremely inquisitive. When indoor he pries into every room, upstairs and downstairs, but has, as a famous sportswoman says, a bad habit of getting up early in the morning, having a bath, if there is one in the room handy, then going up a chimney and returning to get into bed with his mistress. My friend Sir John Lawes, as great a man in sport as in science, had a pair of these animals at Rothamsted. They retired by day to a small pool in the park. It was his custom at one time to drive some miles to the railway-station at St. Albans, taking the train there for London. On his return he never failed to bring back a basket of fresh fish for the otters. As the carriage entered the park on the way back to the Hall the creatures, unmoved by any other traffic, recognized the paces of their master's horses, and coming out of their retreat in haste across the grass, ran ahead of the carriage, jumping up like dogs at the horses' noses till they reached the Hall; when, the basket being emptied before them, they hurried back with their present. Sir John took them up with him to his forest in Scotland, where the pair enjoyed the forest as much as he did, taking themselves off in the evening on fishing excursions in wild Highland waters, to return without fail before daylight. A wretch of a gillie killed the female, whereupon the disconsolate mate became irregular in his habits, stay-

ing out at first for one night, then for two or three, then a week, and finally never came back at all; probably lured away by the enchantments of some wild jade with whom he set up poaching and housekeeping."

Is not that a charming story? I think the picture of the two creatures frisking ahead of the horses (like porpoises around the prow of a vessel) one of the most joyous it would be possible to conceive.

The sight of otters and kingfishers, alert and glancing, in their native haunts confers distinction; but there is a far more remarkable uniquity even than that; and I recently possessed it. What do you say to a Sunday morning walk in Sussex and coming upon the dead body of a badger lying just in the mouth of its burrow? On the strength of such an adventure I claim to be for the moment a creature enormously apart and loftily pinnacled. That we had badgers within half a mile, we knew. Mus Penfold often sees traces of them, although never has a living one met his sight; and last year, I regret to say, a party of stupid men with eight dogs were allowed by the farmer to dig out two of the young badgers and kill them. I did not watch them at their vile work, but I saw their *débris* afterwards, and counted the bottles.

How this badger died we shall never know; but there he lay, just like a comfortable sleeping bear:

in fact curiously like that little Malayan "Gypsy" whom I found at the Zoo and whom you will find elsewhere in this book. His head, black and yellow, was between his long-clawed paws quite naturally. But he was dead enough, and his skin is now in the house as a bloodless trophy and a proof that England is not yet wholly tamed.

The Owl

TO return to the kingfisher and the epoch in one's life made by the rare appearance of that glancing jewel, although this house is in owlish country, and we hear owls from dusk to dawn, yet the sight of one is hardly less rare and memorable. The effect is, of course, totally different. A kingfisher entrances, thrills; one sees it and glows. But the owl cuts deeper; one feels that one is in the presence of a thing not necessarily of evil but of mystery and darkness. That is to say, an owl at night. In broad day there can be nothing sinister about him, as I happen to know as well as any one.

On this matter I have a true story to tell, which, however, I shall quarrel with no one for disbelieving. One Sunday morning in the early summer a few years ago I was walking in a little pine-wood on a Kentish common. Suddenly, at half-past eleven, I was conscious that I was not alone, and lifting my eyes I saw on a bush close by a young owl. He was looking directly at me with such a stare in his deep orange orbs as only an owl can compass — steady, incurious, implacable. I stopped

and stared at him, and thought first of the strangeness of the encounter and then of a humorous poem by an American publisher (Why don't English publishers write humorous poems?) which I had learnt at school, beginning "Who stuffed that white owl?" This owl, it is true, was not white, but a beautiful arrangement in soft browns; yet he remained as motionless as that other, save that every now and then a shutter, timed to about three seconds exposure, covered his 'wildered lenses and retired again into the machinery of his head.

Seeing how young he was, and thinking it better that he should be looked after than left to the attentions of the Sunday afternoon villagers (who can be very deadly), I determined to take him home. I therefore opened a handkerchief, advanced slowly upon him, and spreading it over him carried him tenderly away. He made no resistance whatever. I was the first human being he had seen and might as easily have been friend as foe.

So far the story makes no great call on credulity. But the remarkable part is to come. I gave the owl to the boys at a neighbouring cottage, who had kept one before and understood feeding and so on, and it was arranged that when he was a little older he should be released. Very well. The next Sunday came and on that morning these

boys also abstained from church and walked through this little pine-wood on the common, and at exactly the same time, and in what I take to be exactly the same place, they also found a young owl and captured it. ("You see this wet, you see this dry.") That's a very odd circumstance, isn't it, and worthy of a place in any collection of coincidences?

Now, if I did not believe truth to be the only really interesting thing in the world, I should go on to state that when on the third Sunday I went to the little pine-wood again I found a third owl; but that is not so. Since then, indeed, except of course at the Zoo — where they have all kinds, although no longer any of those fascinating little creatures from some distant land who live in holes in the ground — I had never seen another owl near enough to observe it with any minuteness until the other evening in Sussex. Then, while it was still half light, a large barn-owl emerged from a clump of trees beside the road and flew before us and over us, as we drove along, for two hundred yards, finally disappearing among some ricks. It made no sound whatever; fish swimming in a clear stream are not less audible. Its light underpart gleamed softly like a lamp in a fog, and, like that, seemed almost to diffuse radiance.

This silence is very wonderful and soothing. I would prescribe the spectacle of the flight of owls at twilight for any disordered mind. But he

would be a bold physician who recommended for any weak nerves the angry, screaming owls that sweep round this house in the middle of the night, especially when the weather is rough. Then they are ominous indeed.

Our owls live in the belfry, and though I have stood again and again in the gloaming, watching, I have seen them only once. On that occasion there had been some disagreement in the fields, for two of them came back in full flight together, one pursuing and one pursued, uttering terrible cries. I saw them black against the sky for a moment, disordered and beating, and then they disappeared into the masonry as silently and effectually as water into sand. No wonder, I thought, as I stumbled away among the graves, that some rustic minds think them not birds at all, but disembodied spirits.

The difference between these witches of the night returning from their quarrel and that soft glimmering ghost that had flown down the road was wide enough; but how much wider the gulf between those predatory termagants and the poor lost soul in the Kentish pine-wood. Even in his mild countenance, however, one could easily discern the makings of a bogey. To wake up in the small hours and find oneself beneath the scrutiny of such eyes in such a countenance would be enough for many of us.

What owls really are like, we shall, I suppose, never know: whether they are wise as legend would have them, or merely look so; whether they are truly sinister or only weird and carnivorous. These things we shall probably never know, but there is a lady in Hampshire who recently came nearer the secret than any one else has done. Her letter describing her experience was printed in the "Evening Standard" in the summer of 1910. The immediate neighbourhood of her house, she explained, was once a favourite hunting-ground of owls, but latterly they had steadily decreased, until to hear one had become something of a rarity. This she much regretted. When, therefore, one night she was awakened by an owl's cry she sprang up and ran to the window in pleasure, and while there it amused her to answer it, mimicry of owls being a hobby of hers. But this time she mimicked better than she knew, for instantly out of the blackness came a crowd of owls to her window, angry and threatening and uttering strange sounds. She had, it seems, stumbled on something in the owl tongue of very serious import. Isn't that interesting? She may have called out some deadly insult. She may have hit on a rally, a summons to arms. Whatever it was, it made her for the moment almost one of this mysterious, uncanny, nocturnal race. Her cry, in short, opened the door on a new world,

vastly more enthralling in interest and strange possibilities than aviation or any of our modern inventions can make this. But it instantly shut again.

The Unusual Morning

ONE is liable day by day to a great many different kinds of surprises; but few persons can have known two in the same morning quite so unusual and diverse. . . .

I was sitting in my room, writing, when a new and mysterious sound caught the ear. It came apparently from the heart of the wall, near the chimney, and was such a sound as in the dead of night would lay an icy hand on the heart. Since it was broad day I had courage and stood by the fireplace waiting. It grew louder and louder, nearer and nearer, and at last culminated in a scurry and clatter in the fireplace itself, from which there emerged a robust, testy, and exceedingly embarrassed starling. After looking round in dismay, he blundered across the room and settled on the highest row of books, where, secure in his altitude, he stared at me and collected his wits. I, too, collected mine and realized that my destiny was, as ever, prosaic. For I thought instantly of an American poet on the one hand, and on the other an English lady, a friend of mine, both of whom under similar conditions achieved romance.

The Unusual Morning

For when a bird visited Edgar Allan Poe in his study it was a raven, dark not alone with the sable hue of night but with mystery and fate, and when my friend awoke not long since in her room in a beautiful Wiltshire manor-house, what did she see brooding musically on the frame of an Old Master that hung on the opposite wall but a dove — emblem of peace and sweetness and everything that is fortunate?

How different my luck! A starling. . . . Of all the fowls of the air, would one not close one's house to a starling first and foremost? Yet the only visitor from that so near yet so strange world of birds that ever came to me was this, the least poetical, least attractive.

That was the first surprise. For the understanding of the second, which occurred only an hour later, I must explain that this house is on a road which, almost immediately the gate is passed, ceases gradually to be a road at all, first declining to a cart-track, and then dwindling to nothing but a footpath or bridle-path up a South Down of extreme steepness. This means that when, as sometimes happens, a motor-car rushes past, we smile in our beards and await with stoicism and amusement the groanings and shrieks of agony that indicate that a mistake has been made and that a reluctant vehicle is being turned by an angry chauffeur in a space far too narrow for it.

On the morning of which I write a car rushed by in the usual way, but as it did not at once return I assumed that the party were not uninstructed, but had come here by intent for a picnic, as has once or twice happened — lobsters' claws and other alien and sophisticated *dêbris* having been found on the turf; and so thinking I forgot them. An hour later, hearing the engine throb in the accustomed manner, I knew that the picnic was over, and again forgot them.

A moment after, however, I was called out into the garden by a series of shouts and whistles, to discover that the car had come to a stop for the very sufficient reason that it was on fire. A motor-car at any time is still — to me — a strange object, but to find one in full blaze close to the gate is really a shock. You must have seen it to appreciate it. There it stood, enveloped in flames, while leaning against the wall, with his head cooling at the bricks, was its dejected owner. "What a calamity! What a calamity!" was all that he could say, as he surveyed first the burning wheels, and then his blackened hands, and then me. "There's nothing to be done, nothing," he added.

But I did not wait; at least it was worth the effort of saving, and we brought water in every variety of vessel and hurled it over the conflagration. Here we were wrong, for by watering flaming petrol one simply increases the area of the

fire. Having learnt this, we bent all our strength to getting the car a little farther along the road, away from the seat of danger, then hurling the water over it once more. This done, it was soon extinguished, and the owner and driver had an opportunity to explain.

"Such a thing has never happened to me before," he said. "All these years and no accident. I had just filled the tank, you see, and started her. She backfired. Perhaps I spilt a little. In a moment she was in flames. I did my best. Nothing of the kind has ever happened to me before."

Meanwhile he had been joined by his friends, two cool and collected ladies, who, all unconscious of the catastrophe, had been engaged in the least incendiary of pastimes — photographing the church — and they added their persuasions to our invitation to him to come in and consume restoratives.

Misfortune handled him curiously. No, he said, he would not drink, would not eat, did not want to wash, hated the idea of resting. And all the while, as he was thus affirming and surveying his blistered hands, he was approaching nearer to the table in the garden on which refreshments had been placed. Vowing he would never sit, he sat; declining the decanter with increased vehemence, he tilted it into his glass; abjuring cake, he con-

veyed a piece to his mouth. He then refused to drink any more, and was actually reaching out for the decanter as he spoke. Finally, he said that he had not the least desire to smoke, and took a cigarette. This was the last of his apostasies, for to the blackness of his hands he adhered. And all the while, at intervals, he was assuring us that, long as he had driven a car, he had never previously had an accident in his life. Never! "I had just filled the tank, you see, and started her. She backfired. Perhaps I spilt a little. In a moment she was in flames. I did my best. . . . Nothing of the kind ever happened to me before. . . ."

That is the story. They were soon gone; the car, a scorched ruin, was pushed into a neighbouring shed to await the repairers; and nothing remained of the incident save a black place in the road and a waste patch where grass had been. Life resumed its routine.

But why, when he came to give me his card, should I discover that he now lived in a house in which, as a child, some of my happiest hours were spent? No need for that added touch of coincidence. Why? He might as easily have inhabited every other house in the world. Here you have the prodigality of chance.

The Embarrassed Eliminators

WE were talking about Lamb.

Some one suddenly asked: "Supposing that by some incredible chance all the Essays except one were to be demolished, which one would you keep?"

This kind of question is always interesting, no matter to what author's work or to what picture gallery it is applied. But for the best resulting literary talk it must be applied to Shakespeare, Dickens or Elia.

"Why, of course," at once said H., whose pleasant habit it is to rush in with a final opinion on everything at a moment's notice, with no shame whatever in changing it immediately afterwards, "there's no doubt about it at all — Mrs. Battle. Absolutely impossible to give up Mrs. Battle. Or, wait a minute, I'd forgotten Bo-Bo, — 'The Dissertation on Roast Pig,' you know. Either Mrs. Battle or that."

The man who had propounded the question laughed. "I saw that second string coming," he said. "That's what every one wants: one *or* another. But the whole point of the thing is that

one essay and one only is to remain: everything else goes by the board. Now? Let's leave H. to wrestle it out with himself. What do *you* say, James?"

"It's too difficult," said James. "I was going to say 'The Old Actors' until I remembered several others. But I'm not sure that that is not my choice. It stands alone in literature: it is Lamb inimitable. His literary descendants have done their best and worst with most of his methods, but here, where knowledge of the world, knowledge of the stage, love of mankind, gusto, humour, style and imaginative understanding unite, the mimics, the assiduous apes, are left behind. Miles. Yes, I vote for 'The Old Actors.'"

"But, my dear James," said L., "think a moment. Remember James Elia in 'My Relations'; remember Cousin Bridget in 'Mackery End.' You are prepared deliberately to have these forever blotted out of your consciousness? Because, as I understand it, that is what the question means: utter elimination."

James groaned. "It's too serious," he said. "It's not to be thought of really. It reminds me of terrible nights at school when I lay awake trying to understand eternity — complete negation — until I turned giddy with the immensity of dark nothingness."

Our host laughed. "You were very positive

just now," he said. "But have you forgotten a wistful little trifle called 'Old China?'"

"Or, more on your own lines," said W., who hates actors and acting, "the 'South-Sea House' or the 'Old Benchers'? I will grant you the perfection — there is no other word — of the full-lengths of Dicky Suett and Bannister and Bensley's Malvolio. There is nothing like it — you are quite right. Not even Hazlitt comes near it. One can see oneself with a great effort doing something passably Hazlittian in dramatic criticism, if one were put to it; but Lamb, Lamb reconstructs life and dignifies and enriches it as he does so. That essay in my opinion is the justification of footlights, grease-paint and all the tawdry business. And yet," — W.'s face glowed with his eloquence, as it always does sooner or later every evening — "and yet if I were restricted to one Elia essay — dreadful thought! — it would not be 'The Old Actors' that I should choose, but — I can't help it — 'Captain Jackson.' I know there are far more beautiful things in Elia; deeper, sweeter, rarer. But the Captain and I are such old friends that it comes to this, I couldn't now do without him."

"Of course," cried H. "I had forgotten. You remind me of something I simply must keep — the Elliston." He snatched the "Essays" from our host's hands and read the following passage, while we all laughed — a double laughter — overtly with

him, and covertly at him, for if there is one man living who might be the hero to-day of a similar story, it is H. himself, who has a capriciousness, an impulsiveness, a forgetfulness, and a grandiosity that are Ellistonian or nothing.

"'Those who knew Elliston,'" he read, "'will know the manner in which he pronounced the latter sentence of the few words I am about to record. One proud day to me he took his roast mutton with us in the Temple, to which I had superadded a haddock. After a rather plentiful partaking of the meagre banquet, not unrefreshed with the humbler sorts of liquors, I made a sort of apology for the humility of the fare, observing that for my own part I never ate but of one dish at dinner. "I too never eat but one thing at dinner," — was his reply — then after a pause — "reckoning fish as nothing." The manner was all. It was as if by one peremptory sentence he had decreed the annihilation of all the savoury esculents which the pleasant and nutritious-food-giving Ocean pours forth upon poor humans from her watery bosom. This was greatness, tempered with considerate tenderness to the feelings of his scanty but welcoming entertainer.'"

"Well," said our host, reclaiming the book, "my vote if I had one would be for 'Mackery End in Hertfordshire'; and I make the declaration quite calmly, knowing that we are all safe to retain

what we will. James will of course disagree with the choice; but then you see I am a sentimentalist, and when Lamb writes about his sister and his childhood I am lost. And 'Mackery End' delights me in two ways, for it not only has the wonderful picture of Bridget Elia in it, but we see Lamb also on one of his rapturous walks in his own county. I never see a field of wheat without recalling his phrase of Hertfordshire as 'that fine corn country.'"

"All very well," said James, "but if you talk like this how are you going to let 'Dream Children' go?"

"Ah, yes," sighed our host, "'Dream Children' — of course! How could I let that go? No, it's too difficult."

"What about this?" said the grave incisive voice of K., who had not yet spoken, and he began to read: —

"'In proportion as the years both lessen, and shorten, I set more count upon their periods, and would fain lay my ineffectual finger upon the spoke of the great wheel. I am not content to pass away 'like a weaver's shuttle.' Those metaphors solace me not, nor sweeten the unpalatable draught of mortality. I care not to be carried with the tide, that smoothly bears human life to eternity; and reluct at the inevitable course of destiny. I am in love with this green earth; the

face of town and country; the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets.'

"Who is going to foreswear that passage?" K. asked sternly, fixing his eyes on us as if we were one and all guilty of damnable heresy.

We all sighed.

K. searched the book again, and again began to read: —

"'In sober verity I will confess a truth to thee, reader. I love a Fool — as naturally as if I were of kith and kin to him. When a child, with child-like apprehensions, that dived not below the surface of the matter, I read those Parables — not guessing at the involved wisdom — I had more yearnings towards that simple architect, that built his house upon the sand, than I entertained for his more cautious neighbor: I grudged at the hard censure pronounced upon the quiet soul that kept his talent; and — prizing their simplicity beyond the more provident, and, to my apprehension, somewhat unfeminine wariness of their competitors — I felt a kindliness, that almost amounted to a *tendre*, for those five thoughtless virgins.'

"Who is going to turn his back for ever on that passage? No," K. went on, "it won't do. It is not possible to name one essay and one only. But I have an amendment to propose. Instead of being permitted to retain only one essay, why

should we not be allowed a series of passages equal in length to the longest essay — say 'The Old Actors'? Then we should not be quite so hopeless. That, for example, would enable one to keep the page on Bensley's Malvolio, the description of Bridget Elia, a portion of the 'Mrs. Battle,' Ralph Bigod, a portion of 'Captain Jackson,' the passages I have read, and — what I personally should insist upon including, earlier almost than anything — the Fallacies on rising with the Lark and retiring with the Lamb."

"Well," said the suggester of the original problem, "it's a compromise and therefore no fun. But you may play with it if you like. The sweepingness of the first question was of course its merit. James is the only one of you with the courage really to make a choice."

"Oh, no," said our host. "I chose one and one only instantly — 'Old China.'"

"Nonsense!" said James; "you chose 'Mackery End.'"

"There you are," said K. "That shows."

"Well, I refuse to be deprived of 'Old China' anyway," said our host, "even if I named 'Mackery End.' How could one live without 'Old China'? Our discussion reminds me," he added, "of a very pretty poem — a kind of poem that is no longer written. It is by an American who came nearer Lamb in humour and 'the tact of humanity' than

perhaps any writer — the Autocrat. Let me read it to you."

He reached for a volume and read as follows: —

Oh for one hour of youthful joy!
Give back my twentieth spring!
I'd rather laugh, a bright-haired boy,
Than reign, a gray-beard king.

Off with the spoils of wrinkled age!
Away with Learning's crown!
Tear out Life's Wisdom-written page,
And dash its trophies down!

One moment let my life-blood stream
From boyhood's fount of flame!
Give me one giddy, reeling dream
Of life all love and fame!

* * * * *

My listening angel heard the prayer,
And, calmly smiling, said,
"If I but touch thy silvered hair
Thy hasty wish hath sped.

"But is there nothing in thy track,
To bid thee fondly stay,
While the swift seasons hurry back
To find the wished-for day?"

"Ah, truest soul of womankind!
Without thee what were life?
One bliss I cannot leave behind:
I'll take — my — precious — wife!"

The angel took a sapphire pen
And wrote in rainbow dew,
The man would be a boy again,
And be a husband too!

"And is there nothing yet unsaid,
Before the change appears?
Remember, all their gifts have fled
With those dissolving years."

"Why, yes;" for memory would recall
My fond paternal joys;
"I could not bear to leave them all —
I'll take — my — girl — and — boys."

The smiling angel dropped his pen, —
"Why, this will never do;
The man would be a boy again,
And be a father too!"

* * * * *

And so I laughed, — my laughter woke
The household with its noise, —
And wrote my dream, when morning broke,
To please the grey-haired boys.

— "We," said our host, as he closed the book and laid it aside, "are like that: we would eliminate most of Elia and have our Elia too."

"Yes," said W. "Exactly. We want them all and we value them the more as we grow older and they grow truer and better. For that is Lamb's way. He sat down — often in his employers' time — to amuse the readers of a new magazine and earn a few of those extra guineas which made it possible to write 'Old China,' and behold he was shedding radiance on almost every fact of life, no matter how spiritually recondite or remote from his own practical experience. No one can rise from Elia without being deepened and enriched; and

no one having read Elia can ever say either off-hand or after a year's thought which one essay he would retain to the loss of all the others."

B. hitherto had been a silent listener. Here he spoke, and, as so often, said the final thing. "Yes," he said, "it is vain (but good sport) to take any one of the essays and argue that it is the best. Just as the best thing in a garden is not any particular flower but the scent of all the flowers that are there, so the best of Lamb is not any single essay but the fragrance of them all. It is for this that those gentle paths have been trodden by so much good company.

"Yes," he added meditatively. "'The scent of Elia's garden'! That is the best essay, if you like, and 'Charles (and Mary) Lamb' its title."

A Friend of the Town

LONDONERS know much, but not all. A few secrets are still to be learned only in the provinces, and one of them is the true value of the bookstall man. In London a bookstall man is a machine; you throw pennies at him and in return he throws papers at you. Now and then he asks you to buy something that you don't want or recommends the new sevenpenny; but for the most part he treats you as a stranger, if not as a foe, and expects for himself treatment no better.

But in the country . . .

Make your home in a small country town and see how long you can manage without becoming friendly with the bookstall man. For in the country he is a power. There is no longer any casual flinging of pennies; there is the weather to discuss, and a remark to drop on the headlines in the contents bill. "Another all-night sitting," you say, from the security given by eight good hours in bed: "ah well, if people like to be Members of Parliament, let them!" Then you both laugh. Or, "What's this? — another new Peer? Well, it will be your turn soon," you say, and then

you both laugh again. But there is something more important than persiflage and gossip — there is the new novel to choose from the circulating library. For in the country the bookstall man is also the librarian and adviser; he not only sells papers but he controls the reading of the neighbourhood. His advice is sound. His instinct dictates wisely. "Jacobs's latest," he says, "is splendid. I read it on Sunday." Not, of course, that he has any need to read a story to know that it is splendid; that would be too mechanical. He knows because he possesses the sixth sense with which successful handlers of books are gifted. "What's new?" he replies, "well, here's something good. Take that. You can't go wrong." Or, when in a dissuading mood (and nowadays librarians have to dissuade as much as recommend, poor doomed varmints), "That one? Oh! I don't think she would like that. That's a little bit — well, it's strong, that's what it is. I don't recommend that. But here's a charming story by the author of "Milk and Water . . ." And so forth.

What some simple country people would do without their bookstall man I can't imagine. Take Peter, for instance. Peter was the friend of three old ladies who lived in a southern seaport — a sleepy forgotten town with quiet, narrow, Georgian streets and vast stretches of mud in its harbour which the evening sun turned to gold. These

three old ladies — sisters and unmarried — lived together in a tiny red brick house where their several personalities dovetailed perfectly, different as they were. One was the practical managing sister, one was the humorous commentator, and one was the kindly dreamer. All were generous and philanthropic; indeed their benefactions of thought and deed were the principal business of their placid lives, while the principal recreation was reading. And herein lay the value of Peter, the bookstall man, for it was through his library that all their books came to them. He too divined the character of the books that he circulated by the mere process of touch; and he was rarely wrong. He knew to a grain exactly what was to be found in every book he recommended or did not recommend to these old ladies. In so far as his recommendations went, Peter was always right; and probably his dissuasions were rightly based too, although that of course we shall never know, since his advice was duly taken.

But it is no light matter, is it, to pick out suitable stories for three old-fashioned old ladies with very decided views as to what is fitting and nice, and what not, when the books (and here is the real difficulty) were to be read aloud? For this meant of course that the three personalities had to be taken into consideration. Each book had to please, or at any rate not offend, an old lady who

was of a practical managing turn, and an old lady who was herself a bit of a quiz (as all good novelists must be), and an old lady who had Utopian dreams.

Peter, you see, must have been rather remarkable. "No," he would say, "I don't think Miss Dorcas would like that . . . the gambling passages. . . . I'd recommend this if it weren't for Miss Kate. But she'd never like the divorce proceedings. . . ." And so on.

Reading aloud was to these old ladies a kind of ritual. They looked forward to it all day, and then as each chapter was finished they discussed it and approved or disapproved. When it comes to analyzing the pleasures of life, the privilege of approving and disapproving in conversation must be ranked very high, and reading aloud makes it so very harmless an amusement, since no tale-bearing is involved. This they did, and not only during the reading but at meals too, and often they would come down to breakfast after a rather wakeful night with new theories as to the conduct of hero or heroine. Happy Peter, to set so much gentle machinery in motion!

Of course, he was not able always to satisfy their programme. Sometimes for weeks and weeks together no new books (not only fiction, of course: memoirs and travels they were very fond of) would be published; but when he really struck

gold how happy they all were. I remember that I found them once — it was thirteen years ago — in a state of joyful excitement over one of Peter's most inspired suggestions — Miss Jewett's "Country of the Pointed Firs." Never could three old ladies of simple tastes and warm hearts have been more delighted with a printed page. I wished Peter could have seen them.

Is he still acting as friend to that little town, I wonder. He was so capable that probably he has been promoted to a wider sphere. For that is what happens to these friends of the small town: they are raised to positions of more importance and better salaries, and the chances are that the old personal intimacy goes altogether. They may, for example, be elevated to the place of manager at, say, London Bridge. Then is all their kindliness and thoughtfulness over: they become machines: very targets for pennies and half-pennies all day long, with no time for the humaner intercourse.

Well, the price of getting on has always been heavy; but here it is paid not only by the friend but by the small town too. It is hard when nice old ladies are also penalized.

Gypsy

IT is a shocking thing, after ringing the bell to inquire after a friend, to be told that she is dead.

That recently happened to me. I rang the bell and waited on the step. The door was at last opened by a man in livery, or at any rate uniform, who knew me. I made to enter, remarking "How is Delia?" "Delia?" he said. "Delia is dead."

Here was a blow! I had been thinking of Delia all the way to Regent's Park, seeing again in anticipation her sad and yearning eyes, her pathetic, dumb face, her auburn locks, feeling her confiding hand in mine.

"Dead!" I said.

"Yes," he replied, "pneumonia. But Annie's here if you'd like to see her. And Jerry too."

"Of course," I said, and followed him to their abode; stopping in the kitchen on the way for some grapes and milk.

Delia was an ourang-outang; Annie is a chimpanzee. Delia was a red woman — "Sweet Auburn, loveliest sample of the Plain!" one

murmured as one looked at her; Annie is a brunette. Annie sits all day in her little basement home, with Jerry, and now and then receives privileged visitors, such as His Majesty, whose hat — just as if it were mine — she seized and hurled to the other end of the room, and the young Princes and Princesses, and Fellows of the Society and their friends. Annie is "that mischievous," but Jerry is thoughtful and low-pulsed. Annie will snatch whatever you have that pleases her and rush to the ceiling with it; Jerry sits quite still and looks at you with bright eyes filled with ten thousand sorrows.

Annie has some of Delia's charm; but oh, how much more had Delia! Annie also spreads her arms for an embrace and is curious about clothes; but Delia — no, there will never be another Delia.

It was while wandering at random regretting Delia that I came upon Gypsy.

Now, Gypsy also is not Delia; but Gypsy's companionableness and merriment and candour go far to soften the loss. A Zoo with both Delia and Gypsy in it would be almost too fortunate — shall I put it like that? I found her in the Small Cats' House, that abode of bright eyes and stealthy quicknesses, and, surely, she is out of place. For her fellow-creatures in the surrounding cages are subtle and swift, predatory and untrustworthy, while she is the most transparently harmless,

blundering, foolish, faithful thing you could conceive, without a movement that is not clumsy or a thought that is not obvious.

She was eating chocolate when I found her, seated firmly on the floor and picking the silver paper off with her teeth as skilfully as a child. Having finished the chocolate and satisfied herself (no rapid business) that there was no more, she turned to another visitor for entertainment and seized his walking-stick. Whether she recognized a compatriot — for it was a Malacca cane, and she is a Malayan bear from the same district — or whether all walking-sticks present equal attractions, I do not know; but she fondled this one with the utmost tenderness, shouldered it, hugged it, nursed it, bit it, and did her best to poke out her insignificant but very capable eyes with it.

Then she rose to her full but trumpery height and flung her arms round my leg.

Then she turned to her indulgent keeper — whose happiness at being entrusted with a straightforward baby-bear after the monotony of complex Small Cats is delightful to watch — and they set to at a sparring-match with tremendous spirit. Gypsy is not an in-fighter (like Welsh) nor an offensive assaulter (like Johnson); her method is to deliver two or three open-handed blows (which are not allowed in the Ring) and then to escape punishment, at any rate on the face or chest, by

rolling herself into a ball and squirming and revolving on the ground. This exposes her unguarded rotundities to attack, it is true, but blows there she seems to enjoy, although affecting to avoid; and then rising to her feet she again advances to the fray and repeats the performance. She is very gentle, and in some mysterious way softens her claws when she hits.

The contest over, Gypsy turned to my "Pall-Mall Gazette" and proceeded very deliberately and scrupulously to demolish it. Whether a paper written by gentlemen for gentlemen has ever before been made a Malayan baby-bear's plaything, I do not know; but it is a very satisfying one, and kept her busy and happy for ten minutes. And all the while as she walked up and down the floor among the visitors, tearing the pages into shreds, the Small Cats in their cages were following her with intense and glittering gaze, while the largest of them — a young puma — flung himself once or twice in her direction like a lovely grey missile, to be brought up sharp against his bars.

To any one in need of a new pet I can recommend a Malayan baby-bear. Gypsy stands about forty-two inches, and is entirely covered with short, strong, yet soft hair, nearer black than brown. Her neck is a rich tawny yellow. Her mouth is full of teeth which do not bite, and her paws have long and very hard horn-like nails

which do not scratch. She is more like a magnified mole than anything in the world; absurdly so, in fact. Her obedience is instant. "Back to your cage, Gypsy," says her keeper, and she returns to it; "Shut your door, Gypsy," says her keeper, and she shuts it. She then climbs to a lofty perch and smiles the smile of the virtuous and uncomplaining — a lesson to the restless ocelot and unquiet lynx.

There are always a few babies at the Zoo for those that think to ask for them. After I had seen Gypsy I saw a lion of tender years and he allowed me to ruffle his head and tickle his cheeks; but no such liberties are possible with the infant jaguar, which was born in January, 1911, and is anything but the harmless pat of butter that it looks. And then I held between my finger and thumb a six-weeks' old alligator while he squirmed and raged and did everything he could to close his fret-saw jaws over me.

But none of these privileges of course made up for Delia's death, and nothing can.

A Sale

THE sale of the late Sir John Day's pictures was particularly interesting to me, since it happens that I have the satisfaction of sharing that good judge's predilections. His gods are for the most part mine. I, too, would choose for my walls (if I had any) Corots and Daubignys, Marises and Mauves, Millets and Bosbooms, Rousseaus and De Wints. I, too, prefer the wistful crepuscule to the vivid noon. Hence I entered Christie's at a quarter to one on 13 May, 1909, and took the place that a boy messenger was keeping for me, with feelings of peculiar excitement and enthusiasm.

The seated company at a big sale at Christie's is as unchanging as an ordinary congregation. A few strangers may be there, looking in for the first time, but the rest, the regular attendants, the pew-owners, so to speak, know each other, and are known to the auctioneer, so that the bids of those who engage in the contest are, as at most sales where dealers congregate, often imperceptible to others, although to him clear as speech.

We opened modestly. Lot 1 was a seascape by De Bock, and the first bid was five guineas. It

little thought, that bid, what a huge total would be built upon it. The De Bock reached 160 guineas, and then made room for a Bosboom. Bosboom is a modern Dutch painter, now dead (you may see his palette in the Museum at the Hague), whose ecclesiastical interiors have a grave and sombre beauty that I suppose has never been equalled. Among collectors he is becoming more and more desired.

After the Bosbooms we came to the Corots, of which there were a round dozen, and a little anticipatory flutter was perceptible in the room. There are better Corots in the world than Sir John Day possessed; but this procession of twelve of the tender, serene canvases from the Ville d'Avray studio was very wonderful, and one lost the bidding in the quietude of the paint. Among them were three early works, when the artist liked a more rarefied air than later in life. And these one has to know in order to realize fully not only how superb Corot was, but how bewilderingly blind were the connoisseurs of that day to let him languish as they did. Of course it is easy to recognize his greatness now, when the very name Corot carries magic with it; it is difficult to put one's self back into those times when it meant nothing, and to see the pictures with eyes unassisted by tradition; and yet I find it hard to believe that if one of these early works had come to me

suddenly out of a clear sky, I should have failed to be arrested by it.

Well, there we sat, packed together like excursionists, while the giant picture-dealers of Europe fought for these pacific landscapes — these sweet lark songs among the light clouds of the grey day, to quote Corot's own description of his ideal — until the dozen had reached a total of nearly £12,000.

To Corot succeeded his friend Charles Daubigny, whose vast and luminous "Harvest Moon" produced the instant bid of 1000 guineas, to which, after a long interval of silence, it fell. His "Bords de l'Oise," a great wet landscape, with Daubigny's stern, sincere beauty drenching it, brought 1800 guineas. Others followed, and then five rich scenes by Diaz, also a citizen of the white village of Barbizon, whose home you may see to-day, with a tablet on the gate, almost opposite the rambling house of Jean François Millet. The first of these Diazes was an evening picture with cattle coming down to drink beneath a stormy sky; not unlike the superb moorland scene from the same brush which Mr. Salting left to the National Gallery. It began at fifty guineas and reached 850. (By the way, the starting of safe pictures at fifty and a hundred guineas would be a pleasant task for a reduced gentleman of the Captain Jackson type, who, able no longer to collect, wished still to

sun himself in the illusion of prosperity and connoisseurship. To make in a loud voice a bid of 100 or 500 guineas, whether one has such a sum in the bank or not, must do something for the spirit. It cannot leave one quite where one was.)

After Diaz, Jules Dupré, another great and sincere painter of landscape, a direct disciple of Constable (who was a founder of the Barbizon school) and the friend of Corot, Rousseau, and their friends. It was Dupré who said beautifully of Corot that he might — it was within the bounds of possibility — be replaced as a painter, but never as a man. There were five Duprés, upon the first of which a sanguine friend of mine, unconscious of the growing value of this master, had placed the sum of £100, for which I was to try and get it for him. It was too little, I had suggested; but no, Dupré was not much considered, he fondly replied. His face fell when I told him how the first bid had been 200 guineas and the last 520.

It is one of the charms of Christie's that you never can tell. Pictures fetch every day unexpected prices, both high and low. Good pictures slip through, taking the room unawares, and bad pictures occasionally reach absurd figures, for various reasons. This Dupré, however, was fine. I once bought at Christie's for two guineas two water-colour drawings attributed to Clarkson

Stanfield, and, behold, on stripping them to be framed again, one was revealed, by a minute history on its back, to be a David Cox worth many times what I gave for it. Let no one despair of a bargain, even when all the dealers from the Continent and all the dollars from America are present. The dealers' idea, it must be remembered, is to sell again, and they buy accordingly. Many a good picture does not appeal to the commercial eye. At this sale, for instance, five examples of the, to me, impressive art of Georges Michel, the rich and sombre painter of windmills, a French Crome, brought together only a little more than 100 guineas, while on the second or water-colour day, there were many lots that went far too cheaply. In a sale where competition is concentrated upon the great works, the humble collector has often a chance.

After the Duprés came the Harpignies', in which Sir John Day was peculiarly rich. This grand old man, who is still (1911) hale, at the age of 92, has been painting all his life in oil and water-colour, and has never put forth a meretricious or hurried thing. He is the link between Barbizon and the present day. Less charming, perhaps, than the greatest men of that school, he is more of a realist, and trees and foliage have no closer or more inspired student. His great lack, I suppose, is tenderness; everything else he has

It is good to know that in this fine, sure hand the blood still flows; that this artist, who has loved the world of beauty so long, is still able to enjoy it; and that he can watch himself becoming an Old Master, and the quarry of the collector, while he is still living.

The old age of artists was a theme on which Hazlitt wrote one of his best essays, and just now, were he to be still among us, he would find new subjects for study — for not only is there Harpignies at ninety-two in France, but Sir John Tenniel at ninety-two in London; while it is only a year or so since William Callow died at ninety-six, and W. P. Frith at ninety-one. An artist — particularly an open-air artist, like Harpignies and Callow — has, one would say, every opportunity of attaining to a great age. Given a strong constitution and the absence of such harassments as, for example, bowed prematurely the head of Haydon, there is little to put a strain upon his faculties or physique. By the conditions of his art he cannot work at night. He is a daylight man: he lives upon light and air; he is in direct *rapport* with the sun; he watches the skies (and how few of us do that!); his eye, searching for beauty and knowing beauty when it sees it, is constantly being rewarded in the best way — and that must make for the content that in its turn must make for longevity. When the painter's temperament

has both placidity and simplicity, it must be the happiest of all.

Harpignies' prices at Sir John Day's sale were far in advance of anything he had previously made at Christies'. The largest picture produced 1800 guineas, and the eleven 6270 guineas. A week later, however, the old man's English record rose to 2000 guineas at the Cuthbertson sale.

So far all the important work had been French, but now (the arrangement was alphabetical) came in an illustrious Dutchman, another Nestor — Joseph Israels, still happily active at the age of 87. Mr. Preyer, of Amsterdam, who hitherto had been silent, began now to be busy. For the most important picture, "Bonheur Maternel," 1080 guineas were paid, and for five others 2470 guineas — among them "The Fisher," which fell to Mr. Drücker and added yet another to a collection of Israels' which has overflowed both into our National Gallery and into the City Museum at Amsterdam.

After the "Shepherdess" of Charles Jacque, who painted sheep more brilliantly than any hand ever before, had been sold for 1680 guineas, we entered upon a longer Dutch interlude, filled by the three Marises, Mauve, and Mesdag; and once again the room fluttered, for the name of Maris grows more powerful every year. There is, indeed, perhaps no recent prolific painter so certain

of a great financial future as the late James Maris. On every sale his prices rise, both for oil and water-colour. His brother Matthew I do not set against him in rivalry, because Matthew stands apart. He is an exotic, the most fastidiously select painter of our day, beyond Whistler even. Matthew Maris is alone: a reserved, half-mystical exile, who has always painted as little rather than as much as possible, and has never taken his brush in hand but to produce a masterpiece unique and haunting. To him we come soon.

James Maris was as abundant as Matthew has been restrained; and this makes the huge figures that his work now commands, and will, I believe, increasingly command, the more interesting. Sir John Day had fifteen of his oils and thirteen of his water-colours, all of which he bought during the artist's life (only recently ended) through dealers at modest enough sums, averaging for the oils something about £80, and for the water-colours £40. At the sale the oils averaged £1000 and the water-colours £400. The highest sum paid for a single oil was 1600 guineas for a view of Dordrecht. That was large, but the following week, at the Cuthbertson sale, a James Maris brought 4000 guineas.

These prices may sound absurd, but they are not. An artist now and then becomes the fashion and excites competition beyond his deserts; but

not so James Maris. James Maris was a great painter of skies, a great painter of river-side towns, a great painter of his native land. He saw things largely and painted them largely (now and then a little in the manner of the most beautiful landscape in the world — Vermeer's "View of Delft"), and these facts are now known. His future, I fancy, is as secure as that of Constable and Crome. It gave me immense pleasure to see the brave, candid painter so popular.

And then Matthew Maris, and the first thrill of the sale. James's rich and buoyant canvases, one by one on the easel, and the competition of the bidders, had set pulses agreeably beating; but we had not broken into applause. The first applause — no small thing at Christie's, where impassivity is cultivated not only as a gentlemanly English habit but also from motives of commercial self-protection — the first applause was won by Lot 77.

What was Lot 77? The quietest little red and brown picture you ever saw, $8\frac{1}{2}$ by $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches; "a town [in the words of the catalogue] on the farther bank of a river; standing well above the red roofs of the houses are seen four windmills; a bridge crosses the river on the right; a barge and raft lying against the bank; a peasant woman in the foreground." Such is "The Four Mills" of Matthew Maris, that strange, exclusive genius, most remarkable of the three Maris brothers.

Matthew was born in 1835, and is therefore now an old man. He lives in lodgings in London, far from Holland and its mills and canals and sweeping sky: solitary and sad, with a few marvellous classics to his name, and on the walls of his sitting-room some dreadful oleographs which he will not ask the landlady to remove for fear of hurting her feelings. Here he lives, painting a little every day, — but they are pictures for no one to see, — and writing (I am told) some of the best letters of our time. The old age of artists! Hazlitt truly knew what to write about.

Matthew Maris has lived in England ever since he left Paris after the war. He even carried a rifle in that struggle, but it is characteristic of his gentle nature that he refused to load it. When he gave up painting for the public I know not. But the latest work that I know — that exquisite picture entitled "Butterflies" — a little blue girl lying in the grass, which seems to make much of both Whistler and Albert Moore insincere and even unnecessary, is dated 1874. It was exhibited in London again in 1909, with sixteen other of his works, including the adorable "Enfant Couchée" and one of the low-toned Montmartre souvenirs.

Such is the painter of Lot 77, which left his easel in 1871 and was then sold with difficulty for 100 francs, or four English sovereigns, or twenty American dollars, to M. Goupil, of Paris, who, it

is recorded, threw in a little friendly lecture on the folly of painting "such unsaleable stuff." Well, here it was now, Lot 77, "The Four Mills," thirty-eight years older, and beautiful beyond description, with an appeal to the deeper nature of the connoisseur such as I cannot put into words. "Why," I asked an artist, as we stood before it on the day before the sale, "why is it so good?" "Partly," he said, "because he never wanted to show how cleverly he could paint. Everything has its true value. It is so simple and so sincere." But this, of course, is not all. There is also the curious and exquisite alchemy of the painter's mind; and how much of the painter is in this particular masterpiece may be gathered from the circumstance that (as I happen to know) it does not represent any real Dutch town at all but was an invention of his own. The Four Mills exist only on this canvas and in Matthew Maris's strange and beautiful brain.

Lot 77. We have seen what the dealer gave the artist for it — 100 francs. It then passed to Lord Powerscourt, and it was from his collection that Sir John Day bought it for £120. It was now, therefore, being sold for the third time.

"Lot 77. What shall I say for a start, gentlemen?"

"A thousand guineas? Thank you. A thousand guineas for this picture."

"Eleven hundred."

"Twelve."

"Thirteen."

"Fourteen."

"Fifteen."

"Sixteen."

"Seventeen."

"Seventeen fifty."

"Eighteen."

"Eighteen fifty."

"Nineteen." (The red roofs are getting redder, the brown mills browner! The peace of it all!)

"Two thousand guineas."

"And one hundred."

"Two hundred."

"Three hundred."

"Four hundred."

"Five hundred."

"Six hundred."

"Seven hundred."

"Eight hundred."

"Nine hundred." (How quiet and beautiful, and above all price, all struggle, all commercialism, the picture is!)

"Three thousand guineas."

"And one hundred."

"Two hundred and fifty." (Strange reading for old Matthew Maris in his London lodgings tomorrow morning!)

"Three hundred."

A pause.

"For three thousand three hundred guineas."

A longer pause.

"For three thousand three hundred guineas."

And the hammer falls and the room vibrates with the tapping of sticks and clapping of hands; and "The Four Mills" disappears, bound for the house of a dealer, who was to sell it, in time, to an English connoisseur, whom, upon my soul, I envy. He is the right kind of connoisseur, too; no Peer he, or National Gallery Trustee enamoured of American dollars, but a simple gentleman who has already given pictures to the nation and intends (I am told) to give more — perhaps this very Dutch masterpiece.

Lot 78. "Feeding Chickens." This also is by Matthew Maris, and was painted in 1872. "A Girl in buff dress and blue cap, is feeding chickens with some grain which she holds in the fold of her white apron; foliage background." Such is the Christie description, and it serves to recall the little enchanted scene to mind; but it says nothing of the mysterious romantic feeling of it, or the richness and delicacy and sweetness of it, or even of the fascinating mediæval city in the distance.

For this Sir John Day gave £300, and at the sale it began at a thousand guineas and reached three,

falling also to a Scotch purse — and it is now, I hear, in Canada. Two hundred and sixty-four thousand six hundred saxpences never went bang to better purpose. This second picture, by the way, was painted from the same model that lends such charm to "The Girl at the Well," feeding pigeons, in the M'Culloch collection.

Six William Marises[1] follow, and then we come to another Dutch painter whose work is every year more and more desired of collectors — Anton Mauve, the pastoral poet of Holland, who did for its cows and sheep and blue-coated peasants what Israels has done for its fisher-folk and James Maris for its skies. The place that Mauve's sincere and modest art has won in the eyes of the best connoisseurs is a refreshing proof that honesty in painting is ultimately the best policy, although the honest artist may have every opportunity of starving before the tide turns his way.

Sir John Day had eight Mauves in oil and seven in water-colour. The first oil, "Troupeau de Moutons sous Bois," he bought in 1888, immediately after the artist's death. It was a picture of which Mauve was very fond; Sir John Day gave £150 for it. At the sale it began at 500 guineas, and after fierce competition it was secured by Mr. Reinhart, of Chicago, for 2700 guineas. Pictures

[1] William Maris also is coming to his own. On June 30, 1911, one of his pastoral scenes brought £3200, at Christie's.

with sheep in them, it has been said, always find buyers; but when the sheep are painted as these are, not with the *brio* of Jacque, but so quietly and lovingly . . . !

Mauve, like all the greatest painters, took what he found around him and made it beautiful. He was one of the artists of whom the Creator must be most proud, in whom He must take most delight, for his whole life was given up to the demonstration of how beautiful everything is — and never with the faintest whisper of the words, "and how skilful am I!" Never. Anton Mauve stands with the greatest in his sincerity, his genius, and his self-effacement. American collectors have always appreciated him, while his village of Laren, in Holland, has long been a settlement of American painters.

Our first thrill was with the Matthew Maris; the next was with J. F. Millet's "Goose Maiden" — one of the most lovely pieces of colour that can ever have leaned against Christie's historic post. The merest trifle in size — 12¼ by 9½ inches — an old master — a jewel of paint — from the moment it was born. Millet was no less a great colourist than a great draughtsman and a great lover of the earth, and here, in this tiny canvas, all his virtues meet. Sir John Day paid heavily for it in his time, but its new owner paid more heavily still. The bidding began at 500 guineas and mounted by hundreds to 5000.

After the Millet the most beautiful picture was a little landscape by Rousseau, the painter who left his studio at Barbizon to the villagers as a chapel. "River Scene: with a man fishing from a punt" was the description; but that omitted the wonder of the work — the evening light and stillness. It literally hushed the room. This picture is now in the National Gallery, for all to see. A week later (observe what it is to have the Christie habit) I saw another Rousseau with a richer but not more beautiful afternoon light in it, and some trees painted as only Rousseau could paint them, which brought 4600 guineas. (If forests can think, if villages have thoughts, what must be the reflection of Fontainebleau and Barbizon when they receive the news of these Christie contests!)

And so the day finished, some £75,000 having changed hands in three hours — a large sum for a little paint. A little paint, do I say? That is true; but a new world, too — a world of wistful beauty. And that, of course, cannot be appraised: it is dear at a five-pound note, if you do not want it — if your taste is unlike Sir John Day's; it is cheap at all you have, if you desire it sufficiently.

A Georgian Town

THIS little town may be said to consist of three things — a long, narrow, and not very straight High Street, an almost equally long and equally diverging street parallel with it, and the quay. Both the High Street and its parallel neighbour might as easily have been straight as not; but it is very much to their advantage to curve a little, for not only are curves more beautiful, but they remind one of the street's human origin, since before there can be a High Street there must be a path, and every one knows that no one can walk straight for more than a very few paces. Blindfold a man and tell him to walk across a field, and he will unconsciously bear to the left, I believe; and he will oscillate too.

Between the High Street and its neighbour there could not well be a greater difference; for the High Street is all bustle and business, and its neighbour is all quietude and residential repose. But they have this in common, that both are Georgian and red. The High Street, it is true, has thrown out a few plate-glass shop-fronts in keeping with twentieth-century enter-

prise, and a few new facades are there too; but the character of the street is still Georgian none the less. Its residential neighbour has made no concessions; it is eighteenth century still. Old shipowners and merchants — yes, and maybe old smugglers too — who lived there when George III was King would yet be quite at home were they to revisit it under George V. Hence I like this street the better. I like its window-frames, flush with the wall, such as builders may no longer give us; I like its square dormer windows, its fanlights over the door, its steps, its knockers, its blinds; its town-hall, with a flight of steps on each side, which, after describing an elegant curve, meet at the imposing door on the first floor; and, more than anything, I like its almshouses, which are five hundred years old. — So much for the little street, where Miss Greenaway might have made studies.

No need for me to say that the houses no longer harbour the class of resident for which they were intended; you know that as well as I do. Successful business men have ceased to live in the hearts of towns. Either because they genuinely want more room and air, or because a visible token of success is a pleasant thing to have, they now build houses on the outskirts, and the humbler folk inhabit the old houses at a reduced rent. The town has scores of these villas dotted about just outside its walls. From a balloon the centuries

could be divided accurately — sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth in the centre; then a fringe of early nineteenth, then an outer fringe of later nineteenth; and then the latest addition of all, the twentieth-century villas, spick-and-span, and surrounded with greenery. Meanwhile, behind the Kate Greenaway shutters in the town's core the managers and clerks and shop-assistants and their families are happy — and long may they be so!

As for the High Street, I can tell you about that very quickly. The best house in it, a superb red Georgian mansion, is now the office of the Gas Company. That gives you the High Street, does it not? There are two book and paper shops, and both supply "Punch" only to order. That gives you the class of town, does it not? There are assembly-rooms where an occasional entertainment is given, and an electric theatre has just been opened. (The assembly-rooms, by the way, have a name pretty enough for a heroine in a novel by Mr. Hardy — Amity Hall.) At night, however, in spite of the absence of organized harmony, the High Street is full of melody from upper windows and tap-rooms, or from the white building at the foot, close to the Custom House — famous in history for a smugglers' raid which led to the recapture of a tremendous haul of run-goods — where the town band practises. The little town is rich in small inns, as maritime towns always are; and it has also

two large ones, with spacious yards, relics of the brave days when gentlemen posted, and billiard-tables whose cloth is yellow and whose cushions have some of the inflexibility of a sea-wall.

Such is the High Street of my little town, which, while always a scene of animation, rises to its greatest social height on Saturday nights, when the country people come in to market, and the town-people market too, and the youths walk up the middle four and five abreast, and the girls walk down the middle four and five abreast, and jokes are made, and hearts, I doubt not, are lost, and the little tap-rooms get fuller and fuller.

And now the third thing and the best — the quay. A little Georgian town with a quay cannot go far wrong. In its electric theatres the cinematoscope may buzz and dazzle; sixpenny-halfpenny bazaars may be opened; its beautiful old mansions may house gas clerks; the latest novelties may effloresce in its shop-windows; but the quay will keep it sweet. Ships and mariners will arrest the meddling hand of Time. For there is something about the sea that will ever refuse to come into line. Wherever wind-tanned men with level eyes live all day in blue jerseys, there the lover of ancient peace may safely abide. And the quay of my little town and the boats in her great, spreading harbour are populous with such men. They arrest progress. Even the arrival of petrol and the spectacle

of a fishing-boat gaining the open sea in the teeth of a headwind at a rate of ten knots an hour has not injured them. The sea remains the sea in spite of petrol: still the capricious, dangerous mistress, never the same for two minutes together, never quite to be trusted, and so jealous that in no other direction may the eyes of her subjects rove.

Two little tugs trot in and out of the harbour all day long, often enough dragging in some three-master that they have found in the bay; and at the moment that I write a big German barque with a green hull lies at one wharf; a Dutch tjalck at another; and a variety of coasters thrust their masts and spars and cordage against the evening sky and make it more wonderful still. And in one of the shipwrights' yards a huge schooner into whose way a man-of-war casually loafed in the Channel a month ago is being fitted with a new bowsprit and prow; and since the bowsprit that the man-of-war left her resembles a birchbroom, there is no doubt that she needs them.

I had a little talk with one of the blue jerseys about smuggling. He, like myself, thought of the past with some regret. "I've no quarrel with a little smuggling," he said, in his caressing, rich Southern voice. "No harm in smuggling, I says. I don't say but what I've done some in my time. I don't say that I should have any objection to running over to Guernsey any day and bringing

back a ton of tubs. But the difficulty is, what to do with them? And you would look so blue if you were caught." "True," I said; "but surely there are safe landings all about there?" waving my hand towards the southern borders of this vast and mysterious harbour, so rich in creeks and sandy shores. "Yes," he said, "yes. But that's not it. You couldn't do it alone: that's the real trouble. And in smuggling it doesn't do to trust any one. No," he said, "not even your own brother. Not in smuggling."

Mus Penfold—and Billy

EVERY man, however unobservant or incapable of correlating experiences, must learn something in the course of his life. Some little thing. Circumstances will force it into his intelligence. And a truth that has just been forced into mine is this — that it is a foolish thing to lend your sheep-dog to a shepherd, for the simple reason that the shepherd will at once insidiously and surely make it his own. You may reclaim it in the evening, fondle it, call it "Good old Bob, then!" receive its half-hearted caresses, and feed it; but it will be yours no longer. That is to say, its soul will be yours no longer, however you may cherish the husk. The cause is twofold — first, that the sheep-dog is a noble animal, who prefers work to sloth and a master to an owner; and, secondly, that shepherds are clever men, hiding under a simple exterior much shrewdness and quite a little guile.

At any rate the shepherd to whom recently I made the mistake of lending my sheep-dog is a clever man, hiding under a simple exterior much shrewdness and quite a little guile; and the

moment for which he is living I know perfectly well is the moment when I shall say to him (as surely I shall), "Well, shepherd, you'd better call Bob yours after this and keep him altogether." He knows as well as I do that I shall say that, although Bob has a pedigree like a duke and the shepherd is accustomed to very plebeian assistants.

Just for fun I intend to postpone that announcement as long as I can, because the shepherd and I understand each other and we shall both subterraneously enjoy the suspense. He knows that he is a bit of a schemer, and he knows that I know it; I know that I am a bit of an ass, and I know that he knows it. As to bearing him any grudge for his act of subtle alienation — that is absurd. I like him too much, and I recognize too that he is fulfilling Nature's wish, Nature having devised Bob to round up sheep, and every minute that he spends in idleness walking at my heels being a defiance to her.

This shepherd is the true breed. His father was a shepherd on the same farm; his grandfather was a shepherd on the same farm. His name is drawn from his calling: not exactly Penfold, but akin. He is sixty-six, and he has been out in all weathers on the South Downs ever since he was a child, and he has never had a cold in his life. His crook is never out of his hand. When it rains he carries also a faded green umbrella and an

ancient military cloak lined with red. He still wears a smock. He has never been to London, but knows Brighton railway station. He cannot read or write.

The older I grow the more respect I have for the wise people who cannot read or write. The shepherd cannot read or write, yet conversation with him is as natural as if he knew all the jargons. I never find myself (who have both read and written more than is good for any one) hunting for words within his vocabulary. He has a sly, glancing humour that would make the fortune of an author, and observing eyes that would make the fortune of two. He misses nothing; and, having nothing to confuse and congest his mind, he has forgotten nothing.

He describes well; but his adjectives are very few: "tidy" and "middling" for ordinary praise, "out-an'-out" for eulogy. His Bible at home is "out-an'-out old"; his watch "out-an'-out big." Where you and I say we will consider it, he says "insider." He is that rare thing in a Southern county, an independent labourer. The vicar met him not long since, remarking that he had not seen him lately. "No, I beänt much pestered by parsons," he replied. I can think of no more disconcerting reply to a kindly question; but it was not cruelly meant. It merely comes to this, that his attitude to the world is defensive.

He regrets many things that are no more, not the least being the days when wheatears were still eaten and the shepherds had in August an easy way of adding to their very scanty wages by trapping these little plump birds and selling them to the Brighton poulterers. But that is all done with, and the only opportunity of earning a little extra money that he now has is by stopping earths for the hunt just before the meet; which to me seems to be not quite playing the game.

He looks back, too, to the smuggling days with a certain wistfulness; not that he did any himself, but he could not help knowing what was going on, and he remembers more than one exciting arrest; while his grandmother, over at Lullington, near Alfriston, was always well in with the smugglers, and once went so far as to conceal some tubs under her skeps, which the Revenue officer never thought of searching, partly, no doubt, for fear of the bees. But the shepherd has the same tale as the fisherman in the Georgian town — the same tale, although the fisherman represents the sea-smugglers and the shepherd the land-smugglers. The end of smuggling, they both say, was not so much the vigilance of the coastguard as the prevalence of the informer. Small village life in Sussex and along the coast in the early years of Victoria seems to have been ruined by the presence of informers. A good field for a novelist here! For the most part those

writers who have dealt with smuggling, from G. P. R. James to Mr. Meade Falkner, have confined themselves to its perils and triumphs; but the tale-bearer is perhaps better material — psychologically at any rate. Anyway, it was the tale-bearer who prevailed, and bit by bit the old, alluring, dangerous game was dropped. "The man who lived in the cottage next to you," says the shepherd, "was a rare smuggler. He did more work at night than ever he did by day, though he had to show up in the fields just to keep them from being too suspicious."

Although the shepherd has never been to London, he has done some travelling; but that, too, is a thing of the past. Once he used to take his lambs to the great Sussex "ship fairs" to be sold — to Lindfield and the "Bat and Ball" at Chiddingly, and so forth. But now that ancient custom also has gone, so far as he is concerned, for the new farmer prefers to offer them by auction at the nearest town; and the boy can drive them there. "A foolish boy," the shepherd finds him, "always thinking of something else instead of the ship. Book-learning, I suppose."

Mus Penfold, although mostly smiling and detached, has his anxieties too — and during the lambing season this year (1911) he has been bowed with care. For the weather's hand was against him the whole time. I saw him continually

throughout this trying period and for the first time realized not only how sound a man he is, but how many qualities the good shepherd needs. For he must be good doctor, good midwife and good nurse, apart from flock management altogether; and he must be prepared for little sleep, and the exercise of boundless patience and resignation. The lambs were born just across the road; and I was on that side almost as much as this.

"Well, shepherd, how many now?" "'Bout sixty, I reckon." "How many twins?" "Eight couple o' twins. There's two you could put in your waistcoat-pocket. I'll show you." And I followed him through the straw of the shed, now divided into little hurdled cubicles, like a dormitory, with a mother and child in each, to the barn, where he picked up by the fore-legs two of the forlornest little objects you ever saw. "Reckon they'll die," he said. "I've been feeding them, but I reckon they'll die. They're out-an'-out miserable."

Owing to the cold winds far too many did die; but there was "a big six hundred," as the shepherd said, by the time all were in this green world. When a lamb died Mus Penfold removed its skin and placed it on the back of another for whom a foster-mother was needed. Then he put the living one thus clad into the pen with the bereaved mother, who, smelling its skin and finding it true,

adopted the changeling without a murmur. The skin is fitted on rather ingeniously, with the living lamb's legs through holes left for them and the neck tied with string; but it would take in no one with any intelligence. Either sheep are very incurious or the maternal instinct makes them careless, for the deception almost always succeeds. On the other hand, the maternal instinct can fail utterly; and there were usually one or two sheep whose heads had to be tied close to the hurdle to prevent them butting their lambs away.

This lambing season, by the way, was the only time when I ever saw the shepherd using his crook. As I have said, he carries it with him all the year — in fact, it is as inseparably his as the emblem of a Saint; but he never ordinarily uses it except as a staff or a gentle chastener of his dogs. But lately it was busy. I found him dragging new-born lambs over the straw with it, from the yard to the maternity ward, while he carried another by its fore-legs. The act looks, if not exactly cruel, at any rate thoughtless; but this is not so, for the shepherd is a tender man.

I never see a crowd of sheep without wanting a picture of them and thinking of pictures of others, although one can see cattle and horses and dogs and have no such pictorial wish or association. Why is this? Is it because sheep are so essentially pictorial — because, in the artist's

phrase, they always "compose"? I suppose so. However they stand or lie they make a harmony. That is why one so seldom sees a picture of sheep that is wholly bad; and similarly it is why every photograph of sheep is also a picture. An artist who sets out to depict sheep and makes an outrage must be crude indeed. No artist understood sheep better than Blake, although his type was, perhaps, a little too Eastern. But he made sheep lie about and occur exactly as sheep do. He did not force them into a picture, as Charles Jacque was a little too much inclined to do, nor pose them like Sidney Cooper. But then I have never seen sheep in real life like Sidney Cooper's. My own favourite painters of sheep are Edward Calvert, Mauve, and J. F. Millet; but I possess a tiny drawing by Robert Hills, one of the founders of the Old Water-colour Society, which has as much feeling as any. I saw Millet's most beautiful sheep-picture quite recently — his "Bergère gardant ses Moutons" under a full moon, and it is wonderful. I saw also three or four Jacques in the same collection — the new Chauchard Collection, just opened at the Louvre — and he again seemed to me a shade too brilliant for his subject. Millet came to his sheep as a part of life — the homely, melancholy, busy life that he knew — and painted them exactly in their relation to it; Jacque came to them rather as a heaven-sent subject for

his brush. Millet, of course, poetised them, as he was bound to do, but never to their detriment: they remained sheep, just as his peasants, though poetised, remained peasants. Mauve saw sheep also as a part of the universe, but rather as a part of Nature than of life. Nor had Mauve Millet's wistful depths. But there is a flock of sheep by Mauve, passing over the Laren dunes, that reaches, perhaps, the highest mark of true and beautiful animal-painting. Among the Old Masters I recall with most pleasure the sheep of the Bassano family, father and sons. In the gallery at Vienna they have a room to themselves, and a more attractive collection of warm stables and mangers I never saw. It is when I think of such pictures as these that my brain swoons at the idea of what the post-impressionists would make of a scene of sheep. There were none at the Grafton Galleries recently. May there never be any!

One pleasant development of sheep-nature that the lambing season brings about is accessibility. Usually there is no intercourse possible between man and sheep, except by the hard medium of a crook. Why sheep are so mistrustful I have never understood; for no one would hurt them, not even boys on Sunday afternoons. They know too that to man's care they owe all their food and comfort, and yet the sight of a strange man or a child equally fills them with panic. How different a

little early training can make sheep the adorable Billy proves. For Billy is as much a part of the human family as any child or grandfather ever was.

Billy is a pet lamb in the Midlands — in a river valley far from these austere hills. He is thick and sturdy, with a black face. He fears no one and nothing. His favourite resting-place is the very middle of a frequented path. When tired of repose he saunters about looking for mischief. If the gate is open he strolls into the street and pursues and butts the children. No lamb can ever have so entertained and exhilarated so many grown-up people. The children run and shout, Billy lowers his head and leaps and dances, the people rush to the doors to enjoy the fun. When there are no children he chases the hens or explores the back-gardens. Billy is fed with milk in an old oil can and at this formidable vessel he plunges several times a day, as though he had never eaten before, although he has been picking up trifles since dawn; and even when filled he rarely allows a stranger to pass without groping at his knees in an effort to derive sustenance from them.

I have never seen any other animal with more character than this three months old lamb. He is alive with it, as we say. His countenance is jaunty; his movements are elvish. He is in short an imp, as unlike, on the one hand, the timid foolish sheep of which our flocks are composed as,

on the other, the sentimental pet lamb of Wordsworth's poem. Looking at him one realizes what a waste of good spirits the ordinary method of sheep-rearing and sheep-tending leads to. If all lambs could be brought up by hand, one thinks, how merrie would England be!

But I have not put this possibility before Mus Penfold. He would smell something very treasonable. A humourist he may be, but he is no Radical.

Theologians at the Mitre

I REMEMBER hearing an ingenious journalist remark that if ever he were appointed editor of a literary paper he would now and then devote a whole number to reviews of one book only, each review to be the work of a critic of eminence who was unaware that his verdict was not (as is usual) the only one that would be printed. "Thus," he added, "I should make an interesting number of my paper, while the differences of opinion in the reviews would healthily illustrate the vanity of criticism."

After having just read, with much entertainment, in an old book, the record of the travels in England of an intelligent German in the year 1782. I am inclined to think that, were I the editor of a general paper, I should adapt my friend's idea, and now and then induce several foreigners to visit my city or country and record their impressions in parallel columns; just to show the reader how we strike contemporaries and strangers. But here, of course, the differences of opinion would rather tend to complete the picture than to bring criticism into disrepute. The result would be like

those myriad reflections of oneself that are obtained from the triple mirrors in hatters' shops — all true, all different, and some exceedingly unfamiliar and surprising.

If one of my observers were a man as shrewd and philosophic as Charles Moritz, the 1782 traveller, the excellence of one column at any rate of that number would be assured, for Moritz had both eyes and a brain.

A pastor in his native land, he sailed for England alone in May, 1782, bent upon seeing London and, for some unexplained reason, the Peak of Derbyshire. He knew the language perfectly, from books; and he brought to his adventure an open and tolerant mind, courage, determination and humour. As it turned out, he found himself in need of all these qualities. Indeed, no good traveller can be without any of them. He wrote in German: my copy of his work was translated "by a Lady."

Let us disembark at Dartford on 2 June, 1782, with Mr. Moritz, and proceed with him to London in a postchaise, by way of Greenwich. I have read of postchaises before, but never found them so vividly or informingly described as by this German pastor. It is worth while to pause a moment before going farther and ask ourselves what we know of postchaises in England in 1782. It will make Mr. Moritz the more interesting.

Speaking for myself, I certainly did not know that three persons might (by Act of Parliament) ride for the same cost as one, and that the charge was fixed at a shilling a mile. Had you realized that? I had always thought of the postchaise as a luxury for the rich only, but this brings it within reach of much humbler purses. And now for the German: "These carriages are very neat and lightly built, so that you hardly perceive their motion, as they roll along these firm smooth roads; they have windows in front, and on both sides. The horses are generally good, and the postilions particularly smart and active, and always ride on a full trot. The one we had wore his hair cut short, a round hat, and a brown jacket, of tolerable fine cloth, with a nosegay in his bosom. Now and then, when he drove very hard, he looked round, and with a smile seemed to solicit our approbation." This is quite a picture, is it not? Dickens could have made the postboy look round no less brightly and triumphantly, but he would have given him jokes. This is Dickens without language: Dickens on the cinematoscope.

The road to London is very prettily etched in. "A thousand charming spots, and beautiful landscapes, on which my eye would long have dwelt with rapture, were now rapidly passed with the speed of an arrow. Our road appeared to be undulatory, and our journey, like the journey of

life, seemed to be a pretty regular alternation of uphill and down, and here and there it was diversified with copses and woods; the majestic Thames every now and then, like a little forest of masts, rising to our view, and anon losing itself among the delightful towns and villages. The amazing large signs which, at the entrance of villages, hang in the middle of the street, being fastened to large beams, which are extended across the street from one house to another opposite it, particularly struck me; these sign-posts have the appearance of gates, or of gateways, for which I first took them, but the whole apparatus, unnecessarily large as it seems to be, is intended for nothing more than to tell the inquisitive traveller that there is an inn. At length, stunned as it were by this constant rapid succession of interesting objects to engage our attention, we arrived at Greenwich nearly in a state of stupefaction."

It is very much as a few years ago men wrote of their first motor-car ride, or as Mr. Grahame White's passengers write now.

In London Mr. Moritz lodged with a tailor's widow somewhere near the Adelphi. The family consisted "of the mistress of the house, her maid, and her two sons, Jacky and Jerry; singular abbreviations for John and Jeremiah. The eldest, Jacky, about twelve years old, is a very lively boy, and often entertains me in the most pleasing man-

ner, by relating to me his different employments at school and afterwards desiring me, in my turn, to relate to him all manner of things about Germany. He repeats his *amo, amas, amavi,* in the same singing tone as our common-school boys. As I happened once, when he was by, to hum a lively tune, he stared at me with surprise, and then reminded me it was Sunday; and so, that I might not forfeit his good opinion by any appearance of levity, I gave him to understand that, in the hurry of my journey, I had forgotten the day. . . . When the maid is displeased with me, I hear her sometimes at the door call me 'the German'; otherwise in the family I go by the name of 'the Gentleman.'" Quite an Addisonian touch.

The tailor's widow was a woman out of the common, for a favourite author of hers was Milton, and she told her lodger that her "late husband first fell in love with her on this very account: because she read Milton with such proper emphasis." This endeared her to her lodger too, for a pocket Milton was his inseparable companion during his travels. But I fear that when he proceeds to deduce from the widow a general love of the great authors among even the common English people, he goes too far. He made indeed the mistake that he might make to-day, when cheap reprints of classics are far more numerous than they were then: the mistake of supposing that people

read what they possess. Classics are still largely furniture and decoration. For the most part, I fear, the owners of the hundred best books are reading something from the circulating library.

The widow and her servant looked after him well, giving him bread and butter cut as thin as "poppy leaves." But what he liked even better was their toast: "another kind of bread and butter usually eaten with tea, which is toasted by the fire, and is incomparably good. You take one slice after the other and hold it to the fire on a fork till the butter is melted, so that it penetrates a number of slices at once. This is called toast." — That seems to be a very pleasant touch. I wonder into how many books of travel in England toast has found its way.

His curiosity took him everywhere, sometimes without any introduction, and sometimes with a letter from the German Minister, Count Lucy. His first experience of the House of Commons, with no influence at his back, was amusing and illuminating. "Above there is a small staircase, by which you go to the gallery, the place allotted for strangers. The first time I went up this small staircase and had reached the rails, I saw a very genteel man in black standing there. I accosted him without any introduction, and asked him whether I might be allowed to go in the gallery. He told me that I must be introduced by a

Member, or else I could not get admission there. Now, as I had not the honour to be acquainted with a Member, I was under the mortifying necessity of retreating, and again going downstairs: as I did, much chagrined. And now, as I was sullenly marching back, I heard something said about a bottle of wine, which seemed to be addressed to me. I could not conceive what it could mean, till I got home, when my obliging landlady told me, I should have given the well-dressed man half a crown, or a couple of shillings, for a bottle of wine.

"Happy," he says, "in this information, I went again the next day; when the same man who before had sent me away, after I had given him only two shillings, very politely opened the door for me, and himself recommended me to a good seat in the gallery."

Manners in Parliament seem to have improved a little. Mr. Moritz says: "The Members of the House of Commons have nothing particular in their dress; they even come into the house in their great-coats, and with boots and spurs. It is not at all uncommon to see a Member lying stretched out on one of the benches while others are debating. Some crack nuts, others eat oranges, or whatever else is in season. There is no end to their going in or out; and as often as any one wishes to go out, he places himself before the

Speaker, and makes him his bow, as if, like a school-boy, he asked his tutor's permission. Those who speak, seem to deliver themselves with but little, perhaps not always with even a decorous, gravity. All that is necessary is to stand up in your place, take off your hat, turn to the Speaker (to whom all the speeches are addressed), to hold your hat and stick in one hand, and with the other to make any such motions as you fancy necessary to accompany your speech."

Mr. Moritz had good fortune, for he heard both Fox and Burke. He writes: "Charles Fox is a short, fat, and gross man, with a swarthy complexion, and dark; and in general he is badly dressed. There certainly is something Jewish in his looks. But upon the whole, he is not an ill-made nor an ill-looking man: and there are many strong marks of sagacity and fire in his eyes. I have frequently heard the people here say, that this same Mr. Fox is as cunning as a fox. Burke is a well-made, tall, upright man, but looks elderly and broken." Burke was then only fifty-three, but he had just been excluded from the Cabinet.

A few weeks later, on his return to London, Moritz was again in the House to hear the debate on the death of the Marquis of Rockingham. Fox, General Conway, and Burke were the speakers. This is interesting: "Burke now stood up and made a most elegant, though florid speech, in praise of the

late Marquis of Rockingham. As he did not meet with sufficient attention, and heard much talking and many murmurs, he said, with much vehemence, and a sense of injured merit, 'This is not treatment for so old a Member of Parliament as I am, and I will be heard!' On which there was immediately a most profound silence."

Living authors seem to have had no interest for Mr. Moritz, and therefore we get no glimpse of Dr. Johnson; but he saw everything else. He went to Ranelagh and Vauxhall; to many of the churches, even preaching in one; to the British Museum and to the theatre, where he was so much taken with a musical farce called "The Agreeable Surprise" that he saw it again and wished to translate it into German. Edwin was the principal comedian. Although the play was good, the audience was very uncivil.

Here again it is not uninstructive to pause and ask ourselves for our views on the London theatre-gallery in 1782. It had not occurred to me that the gods were quite as high-spirited and powerful as Mr. Moritz describes them. In his seat in the pit Mr. Moritz became at once their target; but whether it was because he looked foreign, or because he had the effrontery to be able to afford to sit there, is not explained.

"Often and often, whilst I sat here, did a rotten orange or pieces of the peel of an orange fly past

me, or past some of my neighbours, and once one of them actually hit my hat: without my daring to look round, for fear another might then hit me on the face. Besides this perpetual pelting from the gallery, which renders an English play-house so uncomfortable, there is no end to their calling out and knocking with their sticks, till the curtain is drawn up. I saw a miller's, or a baker's boy thus, like a huge booby, leaning over the rails and knocking again and again on the outside, with all his might, so that he was seen by everybody, without being in the least ashamed or abashed.

"In the boxes, quite in a corner, sat several servants, who were said to be placed there to keep the seats for the families they served, till they should arrive; they seemed to sit remarkably close and still, the reason of which, I was told, was their apprehension of being pelted; for if one of them dares to look out of the box, he is immediately saluted with a shower of orange peel from the gallery." And here the London experiences end.

Now for the open road. Having coached to Richmond, Mr. Moritz set out to reach Oxford on foot, sleeping at whatever village he came to at nightfall. But he was not very fortunate, either because he fell among peculiarly rude and inhospitable folk or because his appearance was so odd as to be irresistible. A traveller on foot in this country, he says, "seems to be considered as a sort

of wild man, or out-of-the-way being, who is stared at, pitied, suspected and shunned by everybody that meets him. At least this has hitherto been my case, on the road from Richmond to Windsor. When I was tired, I sat down in the shade under the hedges, and read Milton. But this relief was soon rendered disagreeable to me; for those who rode, or drove, past me, stared at me with astonishment; and made many significant gestures, as if they thought my head deranged. So singular must it needs have appeared to them to see a man sitting along the side of a public road, and reading. I therefore found myself obliged, when I wished to rest myself and read, to look out for a retired spot in some by-lane or cross-road.

"Many of the coachmen who drove by called out to me, ever and anon, and asked if I would not ride on the outside; and when, every now and then, a farmer on horseback met me, he said, and seemingly with an air of pity for me, 'Tis warm walking, sir!' and when I passed through a village, every old woman testified her pity by an exclamation of 'Good God!'"

His troubles continued, for an Eton inn refused to admit him at all, and the servants at the Windsor inn did all they could to make him uncomfortable. He had his revenge, however. "As I was going away, the waiter, who had served me with so very ill a grace, placed himself

on the stairs, and said, 'Pray remember the waiter!' I gave him three halfpence: on which he saluted me with the heartiest 'G—d d——n you, sir!' I had ever heard. At the door stood the cross maid, who also accosted me with 'Pray remember the chambermaid!' — 'Yes, yes,' said I, 'I shall long remember your most ill-mannered behaviour and shameful incivility'; and so I gave her nothing. I hope she was stung and nettled by my reproof: however, she strove to stifle her anger by a contemptuous, loud horse-laugh."

An adventure with a foot-pad and rebuffs from other landlords followed, but in the little Berkshire village of Nettlebed, five miles north-west of Henley, he found repose. Nettlebed remained in his mind as the most charming spot in England: he liked the inn, he liked the people, and he liked the church. His description of the inn actually re-creates the past; indeed, it is not unworthy to stand beside that description of that inn in "The Old Curiosity Shop" in which the nature of dwarfs and giants was so illuminatingly discussed, over the landlord's wonderful stew.

"'May I stay here to-night?' I asked with eagerness.

"'Why, yes, you may.' — An answer which, however cold and surly, made me exceedingly happy.

"They showed me into the kitchen, and let me sit down to sup at the same table with some

soldiers and the servants. I now, for the first time, found myself in one of their kitchens which I had so often read of in Fielding's fine novels, and which certainly give one, on the whole, a very accurate idea of English manners.

"The chimney in this kitchen, where they were roasting and boiling, seemed to be taken off from the rest of the room and enclosed by a wooden partition: the rest of the apartment was made use of as a sitting and eating room. All round on the sides were shelves with pewter dishes and plates, and the ceiling was well stored with provisions of various kinds, such as sugar-loaves, black-puddings, hams, sausages, flitches of bacon, etc.

"While I was eating, a post-chaise drove up; and in a moment both the folding-doors were thrown open, and the whole house set in motion, in order to receive, with all due respect, these guests, who, no doubt, were supposed to be persons of consequence. The gentlemen alighted, however, only for a moment, and called for nothing but a couple of pots of beer; and then drove away again. Notwithstanding the people of the house behaved to them with all possible attention, for they came in a post-chaise."

On at last tearing himself from Nettlebed, after three futile efforts, Mr. Moritz walked to Dorchester, where he hoped to sleep but was not permitted. Late at night, therefore, he set out for

Oxford, and was joined on the way by another traveller to the same city, a young clergyman. They reached Oxford just before midnight, and Mr. Moritz proposed to sleep on a stone. "No no," said his companion: and here we come to the gem of the book.

Hitherto Mr. Moritz has been now and then a little caustic and always an alert observer, holding himself well in hand; but in the next two pages a very delightful satirical glint appears. I consider the midnight theological conversation that follows by no means unworthy to be remembered along with Hogarth's picture of a not dissimilar occasion. Whether it is known at Oxford I have not inquired; but I have several friends there who would immensely relish it.

"'No, no,'" said his friend, "'come along with me to a neighbouring ale-house, where it is possible they mayn't be gone to bed and we may yet find company.' We went on a few houses further, and then knocked at a door. It was then nearly twelve. They readily let us in; but how great was my astonishment when, on being shown into a room on the left, I saw a great number of clergymen, all with their gowns and bands on, sitting round a large table, each with his pot of beer before him. My travelling companion introduced me to them, as a German clergyman, whom he could not sufficiently praise for my correct pro-

nunciation of the Latin, my orthodoxy, and my good walking.

"I now saw myself in a moment, as it were, all at once transported into the midst of a company, all apparently very respectable men, but all strangers to me. And it appeared to me very extraordinary that I should, thus at midnight, be in Oxford, in a large company of Oxonian clergy, without well knowing how I had got there. Meanwhile, however, I took all the pains in my power to recommend myself to my company, and in the course of conversation I gave them as good an account as I could of our German universities, neither denying nor concealing that, now and then, we had riots and disturbances. 'O, we are very unruly here too,' said one of the clergymen, as he took a hearty draught out of his pot of beer, and knocked on the table with his hand. The conversation now became louder, more general, and a little confused; they enquired after Mr. Bruns, at present professor at Helmstadt, who was known by many of them.

"Among these gentlemen there was one of the name of Clerk, who seemed ambitious to pass for a great wit, which he attempted by starting sundry objections to the Bible. I should have liked him better if he had confined himself to punning and playing on his own name, by telling us again and again, that he should still be at least

a Clerk, even though he should never become a clergyman. Upon the whole, however, he was, in his way, a man of some humour, and an agreeable companion.

"Among other objections to the Scriptures, he stated this one to my travelling companion, whose name I now learnt was Maud, that it was said in the Bible that God was a wine-bibber and a drunkard. On this Mr. Maud fell into a violent passion, and maintained that it was utterly impossible for any such passage to be found in the Bible. Another divine, a Mr. Caern, referred us to his absent brother, who had already been forty years in the Church, and must certainly know something of such a passage if it were in the Bible, but he would venture to lay any wager his brother knew nothing of it.

"'Waiter! fetch a Bible!' called out Mr. Clerk, and a great family Bible was immediately brought in, and opened on the table among all the beer jugs.

"Mr. Clerk turned over a few leaves, and in the book of Judges, 9th chapter, verse 13, he read, 'Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man?'

"Mr. Maud and Mr. Caern, who had before been most violent, now sat as if struck dumb. A silence of some minutes prevailed, when all at once the spirit of revelation seemed to come on

me, and I said, 'Why, gentlemen, you must be sensible that it is but an allegorical expression; and,' I added, 'how often in the Bible are kings called Gods!'

"'Why, yes, to be sure,' said Mr. Maud and Mr. Caern, 'it is an allegorical expression; nothing can be more clear; it is a metaphor, and therefore it is absurd to understand it in a literal sense.' And now they, in their turn, triumphed over poor Clerk, and drank large draughts to my health. Mr. Clerk, however, had not yet exhausted his quiver, and so he desired them to explain to him a passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, where it is said in express terms that God is a barber. Mr. Maud was so enraged at this, that he called Clerk an impudent fellow; and Mr. Caern again and yet more earnestly referred us to his brother, who had been forty years in the Church, and who therefore, he doubted not, would also consider Mr. Clerk as an impudent fellow, if he maintained any such abominable notions. [This is sheer Dickens, isn't it?]

"Mr. Clerk all this while sat perfectly composed, without either a smile or a frown; but turning to a passage in Isaiah, chapter xx, verse 7, he read these words: 'In the same day the Lord shall shave with a razor . . . the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard.' If Mr. Maud and Mr. Caern were before

stunned and confounded, they were much more so now; and even Mr. Caern's brother, who had been forty years in the Church, seemed to have left them in the lurch, for he was no longer referred to. I broke silence a second time, and said, 'Why, gentlemen, this also is clearly metaphorical, and it is equally just, strong and beautiful.' 'Aye, to be sure it is,' rejoined Mr. Maud and Mr. Caern both in a breath; at the same time rapping the table with their knuckles. I went on, and said, 'You know it was the custom for those who were captives to have their heads shorn; the plain import, then, of this remarkable expression is nothing more than that God would deliver the rebellious Jews to be prisoners to a foreign people, who would shave their beards!' 'Aye, to be sure it is; anybody may see it is; why it is as clear as the day!' 'So it is,' rejoined Mr. Caern, 'and my brother, who has been forty years in the Church, explains it just as this gentleman does.'

"We had now gained a second victory over Mr. Clerk; who being perhaps ashamed either of himself or of us, now remained quiet, and made no further objections to the Bible. My health, however, was again encored, and drunk in strong ale; which, as my company seemed to like so much, I was sorry I could not like. It either intoxicated or stupefied me; and I do think it overpowers one

much sooner than so much wine could. The conversation now turned on many different subjects. At last, when morning drew near, Mr. Maud suddenly exclaimed, 'D——n me, I must read prayers this morning at All-Souls!'"

The scene of that convivial disputation was the "Mitre"; and if there are any other equally amusing descriptions of a night in that inn I should like to read them. It reflects credit, not only upon the traveller, but also upon the very young lady, his translator, whose name, according to the editorial preface, was "fragrant with exemplary piety."

Mr. Maud, before he departed on his conscientious errand, arranged to call for Mr. Moritz and show him Oxford; but the strong ale had been too much for the foreigner and he was not able to see the city till the day following. He was then taken to Corpus Christi and All Souls and other colleges. While "going along the street, we met the English poet laureate, Warton, now rather an elderly man; and yet he is still the fellow of a college. His greatest pleasure, next to poetry, is, as Mr. Maud told me, shooting wild ducks." After Oxford, Mr. Moritz visited Stratford-on Avon, which he reached in a coach. And after Stratford-on-Avon, he saw Birmingham and the Peak of Derbyshire, and so returned to London and Germany. He had other adventures and en-

counters, all described with liveliness; but here I must stop.

The ideal travel book could, I suppose, be written only by the Wandering Jew, who, never ceasing, as he does, to perambulate this globe, returning periodically, as one imagines, to every country, has it in his power in each successive description to note not only physical but social changes. I don't know what intervals elapse between his visits to London, but they must be sufficiently lengthy to permit of very noticeable alterations, perceptible even to a footsore and disenchanted Hebrew of incredible age. In default of this ancient peripatetic, no one could do it better than Halley's Comet, whose visits are paid punctually every seventy-four years.

The Windmill

CHANCE recently made me for a while the tenant of a windmill. Not to live in, and unhappily not to grind corn in, but to visit as the mood arose, and see the ships in the harbour from the topmost window, and look down on the sheep and the green world all around. For this mill stands high and white — so white, indeed, that when there is a thunder-cloud behind it, it seems a thing of polished aluminium.

From its windows you can see four other mills, all, like itself, idle, and one merely a ruin and one with only two sweeps left. But just over the next range of hills, out of sight, to the north-east, is a windmill that still merrily goes, and about five miles away to the north-west is another also active; so that things are not quite so bad hereabouts as in many parts of the country, where the good breezes blow altogether in vain. And recently as all the world knows there has been a boom in wholemeal bread which was to set many a pair of derelict mill-stones in action again.

Thinking over the losses which England has had forced upon her by steam and the ingenuity of

the engineer, one is disposed to count the decay of the windmill among the first. Perhaps in the matter of pure picturesqueness the most serious thing that ever happened to England was the discovery of galvanized iron roofing; but, after all, there was never anything but quiet and rich and comfortable beauty about red roofs, whereas the living windmill is not only beautiful but romantic too: a willing, man-serving creature, yoked to the elements, a whirling monster, often a thing of terror. No one can stand very near the crashing sweeps of a windmill in half a gale without a tightening of the heart — a feeling comparable to that which comes from watching the waves break over a wall in a storm. And to be within the mill at such a time is to know something of sound's very sources; it is the cave of noise itself. No doubt there are dens of hammering energy which are more shattering, but the noise of a windmill is largely natural, the product of wood striving with the good sou'-wester; it fills the ears rather than assaults them. The effect, moreover, is by no means lessened by the absence of the wind itself and the silent nonchalance of the miller and his man, who move about in the midst of this appalling racket with the quiet efficiency of vergers.

In my mill, of course, there is no such uproar; nothing but the occasional shaking of the cross-pieces of the idle sails. Everything is still, and

the pity of it is that everything is in almost perfect order for the day's work. The mill one day — some score years ago — was full of life; the next, and ever after, mute and lifeless, like a stream frozen in a night or the palace in Tennyson's ballad of the "Sleeping Beauty." There is no decay — merely inanition. One or two of the apple-wood cogs have been broken from the great wheel; a few floor planks have been rotted; but that is all. A week's overhauling would put everything right. But it will never come, and the cheerful winds that once were to drive a thousand English mills so happily now bustle over the Channel in vain.

Not the least attractive thing about my mill is its profound woodenness. There is not enough iron in it to fill a wheelbarrow. The walls are wood, the sweeps, the brake, the wheels, the cogs (apple as I have said: how long were they discovering that apple was best, I wonder). Those fishing-smacks which from the topmost window we see on the grey waters do not owe more to the friendly forest.

I know a man who takes the loss of the windmill so much to heart that he is making a windmill map. He is beginning with Sussex only and marking with a cross every place — so far as he can now ascertain — where a windmill once stood. "That will show them what they have lost!" he says bitterly. "That will teach them to prefer

steam!" The crosses will crowd like lovers' kisses in some parts, for Sussex was a county of millers, and all over the Downs now one comes upon shallow pits from which ancient mills have been dug and dispersed. Imaginative archæologists find a thousand fantastic explanations of these hollows, and one even has been claimed for a prehistoric observatory; but all the time they are merely the foundations of windmills: nothing more romantic than that, and nothing less romantic.

To me, at any rate, this map will be a melancholy document. How much more so would it be to that greatest of mill-lovers and mill-painters and himself a miller and miller's son, John Constable, could he see it! The Sussex mill-map alone would cause him to weep tears, for, though an alien, he knew our mills well, and painted many of them. Even at Brighton (such is the incorruptible beauty of these structures) he found mills to paint. One or two, indeed, still remain, but they are blackened stumps merely — only the ruins of the radiant aerial creatures of their prime, when the master sat before them with those paints and brushes whose magic secret it was to preserve and glorify English weather for all time. You will find some of these sketches in South Kensington Museum, particularly that masterpiece of wind and joyousness called "Spring," which depicts the very mill in which the youthful artist, when milling was still his

destiny, worked; and a favourite of mine is the "Mill Near Brighton," seen over the shoulder of a poppied field, that hangs in the Salting collection at the National Gallery. Mr. Salting showed it to me soon after he bought it, and I longed for enough moral courage to snatch it from his hand and run. But one's ordinary invertebrate easy rectitude prevailed, and I lost it.

Constable's grief, I say, would be deep as he scanned this Sussex map for his lost darlings. How much more so when the Suffolk mill-map was laid before him! He used to say that a miller has a better chance to study the sky than any man: that is, on land. Certainly if he had never been a miller his own skies would not have the living truth that is theirs.

As to the loss of the miller, that is a matter that does not bear thinking about. That the elimination of this character, historically so shrewd and so genial, from the countryside should be borne with such equanimity proves the carelessness and apathy of England more almost than the rise of the dust-evolving, road-devouring car. And what chance has the English ballad poetry of the future with no millers to celebrate? But perhaps the bread boom will really bring him back. Devoutly do I hope so, for the only thing more beautiful in a landscape than a mill that is still is a mill that is active.

A Glimpse of Civilization

THE sign of this inn, like that of so many in the fair land of France, was "Les Quatre Fils d'Aymon"; and who Aymon was, and what his four sons did, I wonder how many English people know. Aymon was the Duke of Dordogne, and his sons were Renaud, Guiscard, Alard, and Richard, and you may read of them in a twelfth-century French romance and in Victor Hugo's *Lêgende des Siècles*. So much I can state, but no more. There are certain things that one's memory will not retain, and the story of Aymon and his four sons is one of them. I have equal difficulty in remembering for certain whether the pen is mightier than the sword or the sword mightier than the pen.

But Aymon and his quartette matter nothing. What does matter is that in a French inn you may be as witty as you can, as intelligent as you can, but some one there will be more intelligent, more witty. We came to this inn, which is some three leagues distant from Paris, about five in the afternoon on a bitter, snowy day. We made the journey in a motor-car through the bleakest country I ever saw, chiefly over *pavê*, right from the heart

of Paris, and the sign of Aymon and his family was the first to greet our eyes, strain them as we might. Hence, since there are few pleasures to compare with that of entering a warm inn while one is on a cold journey, we were very happy when the door closed behind us, and the rays of the circular stove in the middle of the room drew us to it like tentacles.

Where was the *patron?* (We had heard of the *patron* as a character.) The *patron*, being also the *chef*, was in the kitchen — a vast, clean kitchen, with a glowing fire, and myriad copper pots on the walls; but he very willingly called in a lieutenant, and then brought certain hot cordials and himself to our table. Consider an English innkeeper being found at five in the afternoon in a spotless kitchen, himself in spotless white, and leaving it to discuss the world at large with two guests of a few minutes! For that is what we did — we discussed affairs. He had the "Petit Journal" before him, and we went through the pictures, and he dismissed men and matters with grunts and chuckles. He knew the world. He had lived and he knew. Napoleon III had once dined in this very inn, and a copper pipkin was still preserved on the kitchen wall in which part of the Imperial meal had been cooked; but it was nothing to our little host. President Fallières lunched there only a few months ago — in that very chair

— but that also was nothing to him. Life is an individual business; life comes first; and an innkeeper has as much life to live as any one else, be it Emperor or President.

He is a short man, between fifty and sixty, with close-cropped, grizzled hair, a grizzled imperial, and a fierce, grizzled moustache in perpetual danger of being burned by his cigarette. As a young man he was cook to his officers' mess, chiefly in Algiers, where he had a touch of sun, which accounts for a certain excitability and nervousness. (At a performance of "Biribi" at Antoine's Theatre he had to be led out, it was so true and he so overwrought.) He would certainly have written poetry had his parents been rich. Trouble also he would as assuredly have plunged into; and indeed his life is not too smooth as it is, for he is terribly susceptible (those African sunstrokes!) and Madame had to keep both eyes very wide open before she ceased to care.

In his youth, before his Army period, he had been a valet in London, in Half-Moon Street, and though it was only for a few weeks and he speaks no English, it brings him into touch with English people a little quicker; and after a glass or two, if he likes you and Madame is absent, he will tell you of how the only woman he ever really loved was the English girl that he met in London. But this vein is not to be encouraged, since it ends in tears.

For the most part he is a mocker — laughing and cynical — appraising everything and everybody in modern life with a French shrug or a French gesture, never wholly serious and never wholly thoughtless, living in that busy, materialistic French way that makes such contented citizens and such an efficient nation and is yet the despair of every moralist in Tunbridge Wells.

After a while the door opened, letting in an icy blast and a little woman in a plaid shawl. Her head was bare, her light brown hair being pulled back from the forehead in the French way. She had large diamond earrings, a pair of cold blue eyes capable of much surface mirth, and a shrewd calculating face. It was Madame. She sat down at once and began to talk, and talked on, cleverly, commandingly, till we left — cynical as her husband, but more alert. Her readiness was amazing. She took every point and added to it points of her own; while with every new customer that entered for a glass of coffee or cognac or an *apéritif* she had a sentence or two of greeting and jest, flung across to their tables — for in this land of France, where people talk little of the conduct of life, but live it industriously, every man who wants refreshment may have a seat for his comfort and a table on which to stand his glass, and may sit there as long as he wishes.

How far (I thought as I sat there, while the

landlord and the landlady and my friend exchanged their badinage) is this removed from the "Red Lions" and "King's Heads" and "White Horses" of my native land, where landlords are plethoric and vinous, and landladies testy and not too clean, and barmaids vacuous and pert, and bars are crowded by horse-laughing loafers who know not when to stop! How different! And to what class of society in England would one have to go (I asked myself) for a similarly vivid banter and shrewd criticism of life? Certainly not to licensed victuallers, was the nearest reply I could frame.

Her Royal 'Tumnal Tintiness

SHE is absurdly small — a homœopathic dose of a dog. Nothing but the folly of Western fashions prevents her being carried in the sleeve, as Nature and Art intended her to be. But she is small only in figure: in all else she is as large as a Newfoundland — in fidelity and courage and spirit and protectiveness and appetite (proportionately), and love of ease — while in brain power she is larger. Although not six months old, she has the gravity of age, she suggests complete mental maturity. If she were ten she could not open an eye upon a superfluous caress with more languor or disdain. Her regality is such that one resorts to all kinds of expedients to win her favour. She has the more radiant merits of the cat — she eats like a cat, with all its meticulous cleanliness and precision, she plays with a cotton-reel like a cat, she has a cat's flexibility in her toilet. On your knee she sinks into complacency like a cat. None the less she is a true dog too, with nearly all the stigmata of her kind — the black muzzle, the deep stop, the flat forehead, the plumed tail carried

high, the bowed legs, the minuteness, the nervous fluid. Her hue is that of a beech leaf in autumn.

When she runs from room to room she beats the floor with her fore-paws with a gallant little rocking-horse action. When she runs over grass she makes a russet streak like a hare, with the undulating ripple of a sea-serpent, and her soft pads reverberate like muffled hoofs. When she is not running she is asleep. When she sleeps the most comfortable place in the room is hopelessly engaged until she wakes. However fast she may be sleeping, she wakes directly her particular friend leaves the room, her religion being sociability. Left alone she screams. Put out of the house alone, she circumnavigates it with the speed of thought, seeking an open door or window. The sunlight through her tongue is more than rubies.

One difficulty that seems to confront many owners of Pekingese spaniels is the finding of a suitable name; for it should of course be Chinese and also easily pronounceable. But to those who have the honour to possess Professor Giles's "Chinese Biographical Dictionary" the situation is without such complications. Turning over its pages I quickly alighted upon a choice of engaging females whose names might fitly be conferred upon Her Autumn Leafiness. To mention a few, there is A-chiao, who, when a child, was shown to the Emperor Wu Ti, also a child, and he was asked

what he thought of her as a possible wife. "Oh," said the boy, "if I could get A-chiao I would have a golden house to keep her in." There is Chao Fei-yen, who was so graceful and light that she was called "Flying Swallow." There is Chao Yün, who died with these words from the "Diamond Lûtra" on her lips: "Like a dream, like a vision, like a bubble, like a shadow, like dew, like lightning." There is Ch'i Nu, who had two lovers, one of which lived on the right of the house and the other on the left. Her father bade her tuck up the sleeve which corresponded to the man whom she preferred, and she tucked up both, saying that she would like to live with the handsome one and eat with the rich. (This dog is very like that.) There is Féng Hou, one of the favourites of the Emperor Yüan Ti, who, when a bear escaped, did not flee with all the other ladies, but remained to face the bear, saying: "I was afraid lest some harm should come to Your Majesty's person." There is Hsi Chih, who was never so lovely as when she knitted her brows; and P'an Fei, the favourite of Hsiao Pao-chüan, who said of her, "Every step makes a lily grow!" and Pei Ch'i Kung Chu, who awakened in the breast of her lover such a flame that it set fire to a temple; and Tao Yün, who when her brother likened a snow-storm to salt sprinkled in the air, corrected the feebleness of his simile by comparing it to willow-catkins whirled by the

wind; and Ts'ai Luan, who compiled a rhyming dictionary and ascended to heaven with her husband, each on a white tiger. — Here, you observe, is a considerable range — although by no means all — for the selecting mind to consider.

The choice fell upon Féng Hou. That is the name to which, since it is hers and she is all caprice and individuality, she refuses to answer.

> The dog will come when he is called,
> The cat will turn away,

— so wrote an old observer. It is true of dogs and cats, but it is hopelessly amiss of Pekingese. I would amend it thus: —

> The dog will come when he is called,
> The cat will turn away;
> The Pekingese will please itself,
> Whatever you may say.

For, to adapt an old proverb, where there's a Pekingese there's a will.

I do not think that she is ever likely to be a wonder from the point of view of the bench. At least one of the dreaded penalizations is hers already, and she may acquire others; nothing can make her fit to sit beside her illustrious grandfather, Ch. Chu'erh of Alderbourne, that Napoleon of Pekingese, that Meredith, that Brummell, all combined; nor has she the ingratiating pictorial charm of Ch. Broadoak Beetle; but no one knows

what her own children may be like, and meanwhile she is enough for her owner. She has brought into a house hitherto unconscious of it the adorable piquancy of Peking.

Having done all that was possible to make Féng Hou our own, no one in the house having any independent will left, and butcher's-bills rising like Grahame White: having done all this, it was something more than a shock to be favoured with a translation of the rhapsodical pearls of wisdom dropped from the lips of her Imperial Majesty Tzŭ Hsi, the late Dowager Empress of Western China, for the guidance of the master of her kennel. One saw at once how much was still to do if Féng Hou was to be worthy of her race. I quote this most delightful document, the very flower of Chinese solicitude and fancy.

PEARLS DROPPED FROM THE LIPS OF HER IMPERIAL MAJESTY, TZŬ HSI, DOWAGER EMPRESS OF THE FLOWERY LAND

Let the Lion Dog be small: let it wear the swelling cape of dignity around its neck: let it display the billowing standard of pomp above its back.

Let its face be black: let its fore legs be shaggy: let its forehead be straight and low, like unto the brow of an Imperial righteous harmony boxer.

Let its eyes be large and luminous: let its ears be set like the sails of a war-junk: let its nose be like that of the monkey god of the Hindus.

Let its fore legs be bent, so that it shall not desire to wander far, or leave the Imperial precincts.

Let its body be shaped like that of a hunting lion spying for its prey.

Let its feet be tufted with plentiful hair that its footfall may be soundless: and for its standard of pomp let it rival the whisk of the Tibetan's yak, which is flourished to protect the Imperial litter from the attacks of flying insects.

Let it be lively that it may afford entertainment by its gambols; let it be timid that it may not involve itself in danger: let it be domestic in its habits that it may live in amity with the other beasts, fishes, or birds that find protection in the Imperial Palace. And for its colour, let it be that of the lion — a golden sable, to be carried in the sleeve of a yellow robe, or the colour of a red bear, or a black or a white bear, or striped like a dragon, so that there may be dogs appropriate to every costume in the Imperial wardrobe.

Let it venerate its ancestors and deposit offerings in the canine cemetery of the Forbidden City on each new moon.

Let it comport itself with dignity; let it learn to bite the foreign devils instantly.

Let it be dainty in its food that it shall be known for an Imperial dog by its fastidiousness.

Sharks' fins and curlews' livers and the breasts of quails, on these it may be fed; and for drink give it the tea that is brewed from the spring buds of the shrub that groweth in the province of the Hankow, or the milk of the antelopes that pasture in the Imperial parks. Thus shall it preserve its integrity and self-respect; and for the day of sickness let it be anointed with the clarified fat of the leg of a sacred leopard, and give it to drink a throstle's egg-shell full of the juice of the custard-apple in which have been dissolved three pinches of shredded rhinoceros horn, and apply to it piebald leeches.

So shall it remain; but if it die, remember thou, too, art mortal."

That is a very charming poem, is it not? Queen Victoria drew up no such rules for Dandie Dinmonts, nor did Charles I, so far as I know, thus

establish the standard of the little creatures with whose ears he played instead of studying the signs of the times. But it must necessarily strike some apprehension into the breast of the owner of a Pekingese. Is one doing rightly by the dog? is a question that it forces upon one. In the matter of diet alone I find that we have been all to seek. No house could have been so free from sharks' fins and curlews' livers as this, and if a quail's breast has chanced to enter, it was certainly not Féng Hou who ate it. As for drink — but I wonder if any one can recommend me a good, trustworthy antelope-milker: one who would not object to help in the garden when it is not milking-time? Things would be simple then — until Féng Hou was ill. But that does not bear thinking about.

Apropos of medicine, however, an odd thing happened. Féng Hou at first was not always good; indeed she was sometimes extremely naughty; and a little castigating seemed needful. A letter therefore was dispatched to London, to a provider of quaint necessaries, asking that some attractive little switch, worthy of such a creature, might be supplied. It came at once — the most delicate and radiant of rods, with a note saying that it was something of a curiosity, being pure rhinoceros horn. So we have one of the ingredients of one of the prescriptions after all! Physic indeed.

Five Characters

I. — The Kind Red Lioness

I WILL admit that my head ached and I looked tired; but I was not so depressed as all that. None the less she thought I was, and being a good soul she did what she could to help me, and since I knew her to be a good soul doing all that she could to help me, I had to acquiesce.

"Let me bring you something to cheer you up," she said. "Of course it's lonely staying in a country inn all by yourself. I know it must be. But I've got something that'll make you laugh. I'll fetch it in."

I feared the worst as Mrs. Tally hastened away; and I knew the worst when she returned bearing the Visitors' Book.

"There," she said, "I often have a good laugh over that of an evening. Such funny bits there are in it. Some of the gentlemen we get here are such wags. Look at this" — and she placed her fat finger on a drawing of a young man in a straw hat, leaning against the bar while he blew kisses to an enormous figure behind it.

"That's me," she said, pointing to the enormous figure. "I remember that young gentleman so well. He came with two others, on bicycles, and they stayed from Saturday to Monday. So bright they were, and so full of jokes. See what he wrote underneath."

I read: "Dook Snook, Lord Bob, and the Hon. Billy came and saw and were conquered — to Tally!"

"Do you see the take off in that last word?" she inquired. "Rather smart, wasn't it? But they're full of fun, all of them. Here's another amusing one. I remember that gentleman too. He was always full of his jokes."

I looked and read: "I was sent to the Red Lion by my doctor for change and rest. The waitress got the change, and the hostess the rest."

"Isn't that neat?" the Red Lioness inquired.

I said it was. How could I dash this enthusiast's spirit by telling her its age?

"This is a bit of poetry," said my hostess, proceeding to read it: —

> "Of all the girls that are so smart,
> There's none like Mrs. Tally,
> She is the darling of my heart,
> And lives in our alley.
> Signed × (BILL BAILEY, his mark).

"He was a jolly young fellow," she added. "Fancy calling himself Bill Bailey!" and she

pealed merrily. "I wonder what's become of him; he hasn't been here for months," she added. "Here's some more poetry: —

"There's nothing like a Lion that's Red
For pleasant food and comfy bed.
I mean to come and stay again,
But now must run and catch my train.

ALGERNON MULL,
296, Broad Walk, Ealing.

"Don't you think it's wonderful to be able to make up poytry like that?" Mrs. Tally continued. "I do. I've tried, but I never could do anything worth repeating, and as for writing in a Visitors' Book! . . . Don't you agree with me?" she asked.

"Certainly," I said. "It's a real gift, there's no doubt about it. A gift."

"Yes," she said, "a gift. That's what it is. Here's another funny one."

I read: "The Ten Thirsty Tiddlers visited the old Red Lion for the fifteenth time. Everything A1 as usual."

"But of course," said Mrs. Tally, "although these are amusing and make the book such good reading, it's the serious compliments we like the best. All comic wouldn't do at all. Some people, indeed, actually dislike it. There were two lady artists here not long ago who asked me to remove the book from the room, as it was so vulgar. Fancy that — 'remove the book!' No, it's the

serious things that do us the most good, of course. Like this, for instance" — and Mrs. Tally pointed to the following, one after the other: —

Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Flower, of Dunedin, N.Z., spent a week here very pleasantly in July. The cooking was excellent and everything was most comfortable. They hope to return on their next visit to the dear old country.

Comfortable rooms, good attendance, perfect cooking and the best of landladies. In short, a home from home.

H. A. MARTIN,
St. Swithin's, Sydenham, S.E.

My daughter, Mrs. Crawley, and myself have spent a very agreeable week-end here and hope to come again.

J. MURRAY PHIPPS,
Member of the Committee of the Royal Musical Society.

We have received every kindness from Mrs. Tally and her very efficient staff.

MR. AND MRS. J. ARBUTHNOT GILL,
Wood Dene, Pinner.

"Well," said Mrs. Tally, "I must go now; but I'll leave the book with you. And there's an earlier volume if you like to see it. It'll cheer you wonderfully, and you'll just die of laughing."

The honest kindly soul! There are moments when one is more ashamed of what is called culture than any one can ever be of ignorance.

II. — A DARLING OF THE GODS

I see by the papers, with deep concern, that my friend X has been run over by a motor-bus

and killed, at the age of only thirty-eight. I wish I could find some one who helped to pick him up, just to see if he said anything about his end: because ——

But I will tell you. His foible was to believe that everything that happened was for the best — for himself. Not for mankind; he had none of the great Dr. Pangloss's satisfaction that everything that is is right, that this is the best of all possible worlds. None at all. But he was persuaded that his own fortunes were being vigilantly and tirelessly watched by tutelary powers — that he was, in short, a pet of Fate.

And in this creed he had grown very ingenious. I remember once hurrying with him to catch a train, which, he said, he must not lose at any cost. Well, after seriously injuring ourselves — or at least myself — by running with our heavy bags, we lost it.

"Never mind," he said calmly, "I was evidently intended not to catch it."

"Then why on earth did you drag me along at that infernal pace?" I asked.

"Oh, well," he said, "one has to try; one does not know what the stars' game is."

"What do you think it is?" I inquired coldly.

"I expect the train will meet with an accident; if so, we are well out of it."

I took the trouble to find out, when we did at

last reach the London station, if that train had come safely in.

"To the minute," said the porter.

"There," I said to my friend, "what do you make of that?"

"Oh," he replied, "I daresay some one with an infectious disease had been sitting in our compartment and we should have caught it."

What are you to do with a man who talks like that?

Your ordinary fatalist who thinks that, everything being ordained and fixed, no effort of his own can matter, is bad enough; but the fatalist who is also an optimist and secure in the knowledge of his own prosperity is worse. And yet it was rather fine too. The hardest rebuffs (as I should call them) left him smiling.

One day he lost a lot of money in an investment.

"That's very serious," I said.

"Not so bad as it might have been," he replied. "It was done to teach me not to speculate. I am not naturally speculative; I was going against my genius when I did it. Now I have lost £500. But if I hadn't I might have lost £5000 later on."

I looked at him in amazement. A kind of inverted Christianity was at work had he only known it. But he prided himself on his paganism.

Well, now he is dead and can find no extenuat-

ing circumstances; but I have no doubt he would have explained the catastrophe perfectly, had it been anything short of fatal.

"I was getting very cheap," he would probably have said, "and needed rest. I could not have got it naturally, being far too busy; so this accident was sent to keep me in bed for a couple of months and pull me clean round."

But it is hard when the protective stars suffer from *trop de zèle*.

III. — The Nut

He seemed to be an old habitué of the music-hall, for without a programme he had known all that was coming. And then suddenly he came to his own; for, "Watch this," he said to those of us who were near him, strangers though we were, as a new number went up; "this is good. I know a chap in this. I'll tell you when he comes on." We watched and waited. It was a furious knock-about sketch, the scene of which was a grocer's shop, staffed by comic grocers. Humorist after humorist came upon the stage, fell over each other, and went through the usual antics; but there was no news of our friend's friend, nor was the play good.

And then at last a young man representing an aristocratic customer rushed on. "That's him," said the man, "that's old Charley. He's a nut, I

can tell you." (A nut is what we used to call a "dog," with a touch more of irresponsibility and high-spirited idiocy.)

"Isn't he a nut?" he asked us all with a radiant sweeping glance of inquiry. How could we disappoint him? I caught myself nodding in agreement. A nut, surely. "Oh, he's a boy, I promise you. I've had some rare times with old Charley," his friend went on. "You should see him at Forest Gate on Sundays! I tell you he's a nut."

The nut continued to do his best to prove his character. He screwed an eyeglass in his eye, he dashed the girls under the chin, he fell over his walking-stick, he flung his tall hat on the ground. His friend was in esctasies. "Good old Charley!" he cried again; "isn't he a nut? By Jingo, but he's a nut!"

I left him exulting in his intimacy with Charley, while the youths round him glowed in the glory of even the temporary acquaintance of a man who knew intimately a nut on the music-hall stage.

And, after all, that is no small thing.

IV. — The Master of the New Suburb

"*The Nook.*" Is Mr. Jupp in?

Mrs. Jupp. No, lady, I can't say as he's in just at the moment, but I daresay I could find him. He's very likely at "The Limes," or "Bellaggio," or up at our other garden.

"*The Nook.*" I want to see him very particularly. It's about my garden. I live at "The Nook," you know, and I want Mr. Jupp to come to me regularly.

Mrs. Jupp. Yes, lady; but I think you'd better see Jupp yourself. I'll go and find him if you'll take a chair.

"*The Nook.*" But I could go perfectly well. Both those houses are on my way back.

Mrs. Jupp. Oh no, lady; you sit down; I'll fetch him.

[MRS. JUPP *fetches* JUPP *from* "*The Green Man.*"]

"*The Nook.*" Oh! Mr. Jupp, I want you to come to my garden every Friday. What do you charge for that?

Mr. Jupp. Fridays, mum, I'm engaged at "Belly-vista."

"*The Nook.*" Then Wednesdays.

Mr. Jupp. Wednesdays, mum, I go to "The Red Bungalow."

"*The Nook.*" All day?

Mr. Jupp. Yes, mum, all day. By rights I ought to be there all the week, there's that work to be done.

"*The Nook.*" Mondays, then? Are you engaged on Mondays?

Mr. Jupp. Yes, mum; on Mondays I belongs to "Sans Souci."

"*The Nook.*" But this is Monday. Why aren't you there now?

Mr. Jupp. I am, mum. This is my tea-time.

"*The Nook.*" Couldn't you give me your tea-times? You shall have tea — anything you like — in the garden, and if you gave me that hour every evening all through the week I daresay it would do.

Mr. Jupp. What, mum, work all through my tea-time!

"*The Nook.*" I should pay you for it, of course. And really you're much better without tea. You'll enjoy your supper all the more, you know. Wouldn't he, Mrs. Jupp?

Mrs. Jupp. Oh! I never interfere with Jupp's affairs. Jupp must answer for himself.

"*The Nook.*" Well, then, Mr. Jupp, couldn't you give me an hour in the early morning before you start at the other houses?

Mr. Jupp. What about my own garden, mum? When am I going to do that?

"*The Nook.*" Of course I should pay you well for coming then.

Mr. Jupp. What were you thinking of giving, mum?

"*The Nook.*" Well, I would give you eightpence an hour — that's four shillings a week. Will you come? Are there no other gardeners here?

Mr. Jupp. No, mum, no one; and even if there was, he wouldn't be any use. He wouldn't understand the soil. It's very curious soil about here.

"*The Nook.*" Well, will you come?

Mr. Jupp. I'll let you know, mum. I'll think about it and let you know. There's so many after me I have to be careful, mum. But I'll let you know.

"*The Nook.*" Can't you decide now? I'll give you tenpence an hour.

Mr. Jupp. I'll let you know, mum.

[*Exit "The Nook"; enter "La Hacienda."*]

"*La Hacienda.*" Is Mr. Jupp in?

Mrs. Jupp. No, sir. I can't say he's in just at the moment, but he's not far away.

"*La Hacienda.*" Where do you think he is?

Mrs. Jupp. Well, he might be at "Sans Souci," and he might be at "Bellyvista," or up at our other garden, perhaps. You see, being the only gardener about here, he's so much in request. If you'll take a seat I'll fetch him.

[*She fetches* JUPP *from "The Green Man."*]

"*La Hacienda.*" Mr. Jupp, I want to arrange with you about my garden. What day will suit you best?

Mr. Jupp. I don't know, sir, as I've got any day.

"*La Hacienda.*" You don't mean to say you're full up? The whole week?

Mr. Jupp. I might be able to squeeze in an hour here and there. Suppose — I only say suppose, mind — I was to come for an hour every morning before I started in regular at my day's work, wher-

ever it might be — at "The Nook," or "Belly-vista," or "Sans Souci," or "The Red Bungalow," or "The Corner House," or wherever it was? Although, of course, I ought to be in my own garden then, as the missus here well knows. What would it be worth your while to give me?

"*La Hacienda.*" For an hour every morning early?

Mr. Jupp. Yes, sir, time I ought to be giving to my own garden.

"*La Hacienda.*" Well, as it's important, and you seem to be the only jobbing gardener about here ——

Mr. Jupp. No, sir, there's no other, and even if there was, he wouldn't be any good. He wouldn't understand the soil. It's very curious soil about here. It's a matter of a lifetime to learn it.

"*La Hacienda.*" Well, I wouldn't mind as much as a shilling an hour, at any rate at first. Would that do?

Mr. Jupp. Well, I'll think about it, and let you know, sir. I can't decide anything till I've seen the gentleman at "The Trossachs." He has the first claim on any of my spare time, such as it is; but I'll let you know.

[*Exit "La Hacienda"; enter "The Cedars," on a similar errand.*]

V. — The Second Fiddle

"He is tall and thin; a Jew, of course. They are always Jews. He has a large hook nose such as I detest and a black moustache. He dresses very carefully, but it is cheap stuff; still, it looks smart, and women are so foolish. His hair is not long, for he wishes to be thought a man of the world as well as a musician. But I must confess he plays well, so far as technique goes, though he never feels it.

"His eyes are fat, and he has learned to roll them and close them rapturously, and lift his eyebrows, and now and then he sways his head and seems to be in a dream of beauty. That's all trick, and very likely he practises it before the glass, for he has no music in his soul really, and he is always scheming. Even while his eyes appear to be closed in ecstasy he is looking under the lids at the women to see which is the best worth cultivating.

"I, too, adore women, although I am afraid of them, and I am so lonely I don't mind confessing that once I too sat before the looking-glass and tried to make languishing faces like his; but I suddenly realized what I was doing and was ready to disfigure myself for shame. Yet they are so charming, some of the women here, and it would be so delightful to play on their feelings as he can

and make them open their lips just a little and look away into nothing; above all to make them want me.

"Why one man playing a piece can do that and another man playing the same piece much better with real feeling cannot is a mystery. And I would be so nice to them. They would be able to trust me. I would give them such good advice and take such care of them.

"Instead, the women who come here, many of them, come only to watch *him*. They make their men bring them here, and often they forget to eat. Then the men they are with are furious. I have heard them sometimes at the nearest tables to the orchestra. 'Why can't you let that damned fiddler alone,' I have heard them say — every one talks the same in our restaurant — 'and pay a little attention to me?' And then the women are cross, and the meal is ruined.

"But when he goes off — as he does after every two or three selections — to sit with a friend or receive congratulations from the visitors who call him to their tables, and I have to take his place and lead the orchestra, then the men's faces clear again, for they know that no woman will ever look at me or forget her food when I am playing a solo, for I am short and fair. It is no use being short and fair. I can play all that he does, and I love it too, which he does not — but it is useless.

No one looks at me twice. I am short and fair, and middle-aged too.

"But even when I was younger and better dressed and didn't care I never could get women to be interested in me. It is some trick, I suppose. He takes them all in; but I could tell them some things about him if I were asked — how mean he is, how vain, how jealous, how fickle.

"He is cruel too. When our poor pianist had pneumonia through playing for him one night in a cold hall he refused to allow him any money till he was well enough to play again. Five weeks. Not a penny. And the second violin, whose place I took, was discharged only because he was applauded too much in the solos. One who really needed the post too. A poor man with a large family.

"But women don't mind about things like that. They don't ask a man to be kind and good, especially if he plays well. And I confess that his playing is wonderful — technically. But no heart at all.

"Notes are continually being brought to him by the waiters. Sometimes they merely ask for certain things to be played, always waltzes or love songs, and sometimes they are more personal. And while we are playing a piece which one of the pretty women has asked for he is looking at her and making his faces and closing his eyes until she feels like a queen. Isn't it strange? They

should see him when we rehearse. He doesn't smile then. He snaps and snarls.

"'Ah!' say I to myself as I watch it all through my spectacles, 'you should see his wife waiting outside the restaurant to waylay him on his way to his cards and get some money. He wanted her once, before she was tired and plain. Now he only wants new faces and new voices and new admiration.' That's what I am saying behind my spectacles, but no one knows it. There's no telepathy, as you call it, in me. I am short and fair. We who are short and fair are without magnetism. All there is for us is to be true; but women don't mind about that. They want magnetism.

"It is difficult for me, being in his employ and being so unimportant, to help much, but sometimes when I see a really nice girl — and we have a few here — losing her head I try quite hard. I try to catch her eye and indicate my real opinion of him grimacing there. Of course, I can only frown and nod. What else could I do? I couldn't go down and speak to her; but I try very hard with my expression.

"Once when he was making love to a new bookkeeper girl I was able really to act. I told her to be careful. She was a good girl, but oh so silly, as girls can be with musicians. All musicians, that is, but me and the fat 'cellist. She replied that what I said might be true but she liked him all

the same. She took people as she found them, she said, and he was always very nice and kind to her.

"'If you want a lover,' I said, 'let me be your lover. I have no one to love; he has thousands.' But she only laughed. 'There's some fun in taking a man from thousands,' she said. That's what women are. I don't want to win a girl from thousands of men. I just want her or I don't want her. But women — at any rate the women who come here — are different.

"Well, she wouldn't listen, but she was a good girl, and true to me, for she didn't tell him what I said, although I couldn't bring myself to ask her not to. But she was honourable and didn't tell him. And so it went on; he smiling and bowing and playing to the women all day, at lunch and dinner, and going to tea with them in between, or playing cards with his little set of friends, and at night the bookkeeper girl waiting for him. And so it went on for a month, and then he grew tired and left her, and she lost her place here; and if she has any money now it is that which I have lent her to get through her trouble with.

"So you see what sort of a man he is. But that he can play I will admit. He has a wonderful touch, and a beautiful instrument worth a great deal of money. He could earn a large salary in any orchestra in the world. But there is no heart in his playing. He does not love music as one should."

Without Souls

I. — The Builders

I

Mrs. Thrush. What do you think of that hawthorn?

Mr. Thrush. Oh, no, my dear, no; much too isolated, it would attract attention at once. I can hear the boys on a Sunday afternoon — "Hullo, there's a tree that's bound to have a nest in it." And then where are you? You know what boys are on a Sunday afternoon? You remember that from last year, when we lost the finest clutch of eggs in the county.

Mrs. Thrush. Stop, stop, dear, I can't bear it. Why do you remind me of it?

Mr. Thrush. There, there, compose yourself, my pretty. What other suggestions have you?

Mrs. Thrush. One of the laurels, then, in the shrubbery at the Great House.

Mr. Thrush. Much better. But the trouble there is the cat.

Mrs. Thrush. Oh, dear, I wish *you'd* find a place without me; I assure you (*blushing*) it's time.

Mr. Thrush. Well, my notion, as I have said all along, is that there's nothing to beat the very middle of a big bramble. I don't mind whether it's in the hedge or whether it's on the common. But it must be the very middle. It doesn't matter very much then whether it's seen or not, because no one can reach it.

Mrs. Thrush. Very well, then, be it so; but do hurry with the building, there's a dear.

II

Mr. Tree-Creeper. I've had the most extraordinary luck. Listen. You know that farmhouse by the pond. Well, there's a cow-shed with a door that won't shut, and even if it would, it's got a hole in it, and in the roof, at the very top, there's a hollow. It's the most perfect place you ever saw, because, even if the farmer twigged us, he couldn't get at the nest without pulling off a lot of tiles. Do you see?

Mrs. Tree-Creeper. It sounds perfect.

Mr. Tree-Creeper. Yes, but it's no use waiting here. We must collar it at once. There were a lot of prying birds all about when I was there, and I noticed a particularly nosey flycatcher watching me all the time. Come along quick; and you'd better bring a piece of hay with you to look like business.

III

Mr. Wren. Well, darling, what shall it be this year — one of those boxes at "The Firs," or the letter-box at "Meadow View," where the open-air journalist lives, or shall we build for ourselves like honest wrens?

Mrs. Wren. I leave it to you, dearest. Just as you wish.

Mr. Wren. No, I want your help. I'll just give you the pros and cons.

Mrs. Wren. Yes, dear, do; you're so clear-headed.

Mr. Wren. Listen then. If we use the nest-box there's nothing to do, no fag of building, but we have to put up with visitors peeping in every day and pawing the eggs or the kids about. If we use the letter-box we shall have to line it, and there will be some of the same human fussiness to endure; but on the other hand, we shall become famous — we shall get into the papers. Don't you see the heading, "Remarkable Nest in Surrey"? And then it will go on, "A pair of wrens have chosen a strange abode in which to rear their little fluffy brood ——" and so forth.

Mrs. Wren. That's rather delightful, all the same.

Mr. Wren. Finally, there is the nest which we build ourselves, running just the ordinary risks of

boys and ornithologists, but feeling at any rate that we are independent. What do you say?

Mrs. Wren. Well, dearest, I think I say the last.

Mr. Wren. Good. Spoken like a brave hen. Then let's look about for a site at once.

IV

Mr. Swallow. I've looked at every house with decent eaves in the whole place until I'm ready to drop.

Mrs. Swallow. What do you think about it?

Mr. Swallow. Well, it's a puzzle. There's the Manor House: I began with that. There is good holding there, but the pond is a long way off, and carrying mud so far would be a fearful grind. None the less it's a well-built house, and I feel sure we shouldn't be disturbed.

Mrs. Swallow. What about the people?

Mr. Swallow. How funny you are about the people always! Never mind. All I can find out is that there's the squire and his wife and a companion.

Mrs. Swallow. No children?

Mr. Swallow. None.

Mrs. Swallow. Then I don't care for the Manor House. Tell me of another.

Mr. Swallow. This is the merest sentiment; but no matter. The Vicarage next.

Mrs. Swallow. Any children there?

Mr. Swallow. No, but it's much nearer the pond.

Mrs. Swallow. And the next?

Mr. Swallow. The farmhouse. A beautiful place with a pond at your very door. Everything you require, and lots of company. Good sheltered eaves, too.

Mrs. Swallow. Any children?

Mr. Swallow. Yes, one little girl.

Mrs. Swallow. Isn't there any house with babies?

Mr. Swallow. Only one that could possibly be any use to us; but it's a miserably poor place. No style.

Mrs. Swallow. How many babies?

Mr. Swallow. Twins, just born, and others of one and two and three.

Mrs. Swallow. We'll build there.

Mr. Swallow. They'll make a horrible row all night.

Mrs. Swallow. We'll build there.

II. — Bush's Grievance

I am very happy for the most part. I have perfect health and a good appetite, and They are very good to me here: let me worry them at meals, and toss me little bits — chiefly bread and toast, I admit, but nice bread and nice toast; and though He spends far too much time indoors with books and things, and She doesn't go for walks,

and the puppy-girl has a dog of her own, and doesn't want me (nor do I want her), yet I manage pretty well, for there is a boy who often goes to the village, through the rabbit fields, and takes me with him, and there is a big house near by where the servants throw away quite large bones only half-scraped. Either they are extravagant or they don't make that horrid watery stuff, the ruination of good bones, which My People here will begin their dinner with.

So you see I don't do badly; and, though now and then I have to be whacked, still it doesn't hurt much, and He only half knows how to do it; while as for Her (when He's away), She's just useless.

But my grievance, you say? Oh, yes, I have one grievance, and talking it over with other dogs, particularly spaniels (like me), I find that it's a very common one. My grievance is the game they will play instead of going for a walk. In winter it's all right, They walk then; but in summer They will play this game. I can't make head or tail of it myself, but They simply adore it. It is played with four balls — blue and red and black and yellow — and hoops. First one of Them hits a ball, and then the other. It goes on for ever. I do all I can to show Them what I think of it: I lie down just in front of the player; sometimes I even stop the balls completely; but They don't take the

hint: They just shout at me or prod me with the mallet.

That's my grievance. Of course it was pretty bad when They got a dog for the little puppy-girl, especially as it is not a breed I care for; but that I can stand. It's this wretched monopolizing game that I can't stand. I hate it.

III. — A London Landmark

I am the biggest of the elephants — the one that keeps on nodding its head. Why I do that I'll tell you later. The habit began some years ago. You see, I am getting on. I have been here ever since 1876, and that's a long time. I was thinking the other day of all the things that have happened since I moved to Regent's Park from Ceylon, and really it is wonderful. For I hear what's going on. In between remarks about how big I am, and how restless I am, and what a wicked little eye I've got, the people say all kinds of things about the events of the day. Last Sunday I heard all about the Suffragettes, for instance. There wasn't much talk about Suffragettes in 1876.

I read what's going on too. Now and then some one drops a paper or I borrow the keeper's. It took me a long time to learn to read, but I know now. I began with the notices about pickpockets, which are everywhere in these Gardens. That's an old thing, isn't it? We four-footed creatures, whom

you all come to stare at and patronize, at any rate have no pockets to pick, and therefore are spared one of your weaknesses. (Except of course the kangaroo.) I mastered the pickpocket notice first, and then I learned the meaning of the one about smoking in my house. And so by degrees I knew it all, and it's now quite simple. I can read anything. I wish the people who came here could read as well. It says as plain as can be on my little door-plate thing, in front of the railings, that I am — that I am a lady — but how many visitors do you suppose refer to me as "she" or "her"? Not more than three out of the hundred. I count sometimes, just for fun. That's really why I nod: I'm counting. "Isn't *he* enormous?" they say. "Look at *his* funny little eye?" "Would you like to give *him* a bun, dearie?" and so on. And all the time, if only education were properly managed in this country, they could read my sex. It's on the board all right.

I have been here longer than any one except the hippopotamus, which was born here in 1872. But to be born here is dull. I had six years of Ceylon first; I am a traveller. Supposing that I got away I should know what to do; but that old hippo wouldn't. Homekeeping hippos have ever homely wits, as the proverb has it.

Do you know that in 1876 Winston was only two years old? Think of it. He used to be brought

to see me when he was a tiny toddle with quite a small head. I've given him many a ride on my back. I often wonder what is the future of the children who put buns in my trunk and ride on my back, but this is the only one I can remember who got into office so young.

It's an old place, the Zoo. Such queer creatures come and look at me, — lean, eager naturalists, lovers, uncles with small nephews, funny men trying to think of jokes about me. I like the Bank Holidays the best. There's some pleasure in astonishing simple people; and I like Sundays the least because the clever ones come then. Schoolmasters are the worst, because they lecture on me. My keeper hates them too, because they ask such lots of questions and never give any tips. There's a fearful desire to know how heavy I am. What does that matter? "My word, I wouldn't like him (*him*, of course) to tread on my favourite corn!" — I wonder how often I've heard that joke. The English make all their jokes again. They say things, too, about my trunk — packing it up and so on — till I could die of sheer *ennui*.

The Interviewer's Bag

I. — The Autographer

HE was sitting forlornly on the shore at Swanage, toying with an open knife. Fearing that he might be about to do himself a mischief, I stopped and spoke.

"No," he said, "I'm not contemplating suicide. Don't think that. I'm merely pondering on the illusion that England is the abode of freedom."

"But isn't it?" I asked.

He laughed bitterly.

"What's wrong?" I said.

He jerked his thumb towards the stone globe which is to Swanage what Thorwaldsen's Lion is to Lucerne, or the Sphinx to the desert.

"Well?" I said.

"Have you seen the tablets?" he asked.

"No," I said.

"They've put up two tablets," he explained, "with a request that any one wishing to cut or write his name should do it there rather than on the globe."

"Very sensible," I said.

"Sensible?" he echoed. "Sensible? But what's

the use of cutting your name on a place set apart for the purpose? There's no fun in that. Things are coming to a pretty pass when Town Councils take to sarcasm. Because that's what it is," he continued. "Sarcasm. They don't want our names anywhere, and this is their way of saying so. Sarcasm has been described," he went on, "as 'the language of the devil'; and it's true."

"But why do you want to cut your name?" I asked.

He opened his eyes to their widest. "Why? What's the use of going anywhere if you don't?" he retorted. "You'll find my name all over England — on trees at Burnham Beeches, on windows at Chatsworth, on stone walls at Kenilworth, on whitewash at Stratford-on-Avon, in the turf of Chanctonbury. You'll find it in belfries and on seats. I should be ashamed of myself if I didn't inscribe it — and permanently, too. But this is too much for me. I came here only because I heard about the stone globe; and then to find those tablets! But I haven't wasted my time," he continued. "I went over to the New Forest the other day, and to-morrow I'm going to Stonehenge."

"That's no good," I said.

"No good? Why, I've bought a new chisel on purpose for it. I'm told the stone's very hard."

"You won't be able to do it," I said. "It's enclosed now, and guarded."

He buried his face in his hands. "Everything's against me," he groaned. "The country's going to the dogs."

II. — The Equalizer

My friend was talking about the difficulty of getting level with life: with the people who charge too much, and with bad management generally; the subject having been started by a long wait outside the junction, which made our train half an hour late.

"How," my friend had said, "are we ever going to get back the value of this half-hour? My time is worth two guineas an hour; and I have now lost a guinea. How am I to be recouped? The railway company takes my money for a train which they say will do the journey between 11.15 and 12.6, and I make my plans accordingly. It does not get in till 12.36, and all my plans are thrown out. Is it fair that I am not recompensed? Of course not. They have robbed me. How am I to get equal with them?"

So he rattled on, and the little cunning eyes opposite us became more cunning and glittering.

After my friend had left, the little man spoke to me.

"Why didn't he take something?" he asked.

"What do you mean?" I said.

"Something from the carriage, to help to make

up?" he said. "The window strap for a strop, for instance? It's not worth a guinea, of course, but it's something, and it would annoy the company."

"But he wasn't as serious as that," I said.

"Oh, he's one of them that talks but doesn't act. I've no patience with *them*. I always get some, if not all, of my money back."

"How?" I asked.

"Well, suppose it's a restaurant, where I have to wait a long time and then get only poor food. I calculate to what extent I've been swindled and act accordingly. A spoon or two, or possibly a knife, will make it right. I am scrupulously honest about it." He drew himself up proudly.

"If it's a theatre," he went on, "and I consider my time has been wasted, I take the opera-glasses home with me. You know those in the sixpenny boxes; I've got opera-glasses at home from nearly every theatre in London."

"No!" I said.

"Really," he replied, "I'm not joking. I never joke. You tell your friend when you see him next. Perhaps it will make him more reasonable."

III. — A Hardy Annual

"You look very tired," I said.

"Yes," he replied, with a sigh. It was at the

private view of the Academy. "But I shall get some rest now. It is all over for a while."

"What is over?" I asked.

"My work," he said. "It does not begin again with any seriousness till next February; but it goes on then till April with terrific vigour." He pressed his hand to his brow.

"May I know what it is?" I inquired.

"Of course," he said. "I name pictures for the Exhibitions. The catalogues are full of my work. Here, for example, is one of my most effective titles: 'Cold flows the Winter river.' Not bad, is it?"

I murmured something.

"Oh, I know what you're thinking," he replied. "You're thinking that it is so simple that the artist could have done it himself without my assistance. But there you're mistaken. They can't, not artists. They can just paint a picture — some of them — and that's all. You've no idea . . . Well, well."

"Really?" I said.

"Yes," he continued; "it's so. Now turn on. Here's another of mine. 'It was the Time of Roses.' That sounds easy, no doubt; but, mark you, you have not only to know it — to have read Hood — but — and this is the secret of my success — to remember it at the right moment." He almost glittered with pride. "Turn on," he said. "'East and West.' That's a subtle thing. Why

'East and West'? you say. And then you see it's an English girl — the West — holding a Japanese fan — the East. But I'm not often as tricky as that. A line of poetry is always best; or a good descriptive phrase, such as 'Rivals,' 'Awaiting Spring's Return,' 'The Forest Perilous,' 'When Nature Sleeps,' 'The Coming Storm,' 'Sunshine and Shadow,' 'Waiting,' 'The Farmer's Daughter,' 'A Haunt of Ancient Peace.'"

He paused and looked at me.

"They all sound fairly automatic," he went on; "but that's a blind. They want doing. You know the saying, 'Hard writing makes easy reading'; well, it's the same with naming titles. You think it's nothing; but that's only because it means real work. I don't know how to explain the gift — uncanny, no doubt. Kind friends have called it genius. But there it is."

"I hope the financial results are proportionate," I said.

"Ah," he replied, "not always. But how could they be? It's not only the expense of getting to the studios — taxis, and so forth — but the mental wear and tear. Still, I manage to live."

IV. — Another of Our Conquerors

I used to think that the office-boy did those things. But no; it seems that it is an industry, and a very important one.

I made the discovery at a station, where the horrible and irritating word "Phast-phix" on the picture of a gum bottle held the reluctant eye.

A sleek little man in a frock-coat and a tall hat, who had evidently breakfasted on cloves, paused beside me.

"You might not think it," he said, "to look at me; but that word that you are obviously admiring so naturally — and I may say so justly — originated with me. I invented it."

"Why?" I asked. "Surely there are other things to do."

He seemed pained and perplexed.

"It is my business," he said. "That's what I do. I have an office; I am well known. All the best firms apply to me. For example," he went on, "suppose you were to bring out a fluid mutton ——"

"Heaven forbid!" I cried.

"Yes, but suppose you were to," he continued, "and you wanted a name for it, you would come to me."

"Why shouldn't I think of one myself?" I asked.

"You!" he cried. "How could you? It's a special equipment. Just try and you'll see. What would *you* call it?"

"Well," I said after a moment's thought, I

might call it — I might call it —— Hang it, I wouldn't do such a thing, anyway."

"There," he cried triumphantly, "I knew it. You would be lost. You would therefore come to me. I should charge you ten guineas, but in return you would have a name that would make your fortune."

"What would that be?" I ventured to ask.

"Oh, I don't know," he said, "for certain. 'Sheep-O,' perhaps. But anyway it would be a good name. 'Flock-vim,' perhaps. Or even 'Mut-force.'"

I began to long for my train.

"How do you think of such things?" I inquired. "Tell me your processes."

He laughed deprecatingly. "I have given the subject an immense deal of thought," he said. "For many years now I have done little else; I am always on the look-out for ideas. They come to me at all kinds of odd times and in all kinds of odd places. In bed — on a 'bus — in the train."

"This one?" I asked.

"'Phast-phix'?" he replied. "Oh, I thought of that instantaneously. You see, the firm came to my office to say they were putting a new gum or cement on the market, and they must have a good name for it at once. I had no time. I buried my head in my hands, for a few seconds

(my regular habit) and suddenly 'Phast-phix' flashed into it. They were enchanted."

"I notice," I said, "a tendency among advertisers to transform 'f' into 'ph.'"

"Yes," he said, "they got it from me. I was the first. It is far more striking, don't you think? To spell 'fast-fix' correctly wouldn't be witty at all."

I agreed with him.

"Tell me some more of your special inspirations," I said. "Have you done anything lately as good as 'Phast-phix'? But no, how could you?"

"Let me see," he remarked. "Yes, there is the name for the new pen. They came to me in a great hurry for that, too. But as it happened I had that carefully pigeon-holed, for I am always inventing names against a rainy day. I gave it to them at once — the 'Ri-teezi.' You have no doubt seen it advertised."

(Haven't I?)

"That has been an immense success," he went on. "It's not a bad pen, either; but the name! Ah!"

"Anything else out of the way?" I asked.

"Yes," he said. "I was just going to tell you. I was approached by a firm with new blacking. All it required was an absolutely knock-out name. I gave them one, and only yesterday I had a visit

from the Secretary of the Company, who was present at the Board meeting when my letter was read out. He says that the thrill that ran through the directors — sober business men, mind you — at that moment was an epoch in the history of commerce."

"Indeed," I remarked; "and what was the name?"

"The name?" he said. "Ah, yes. It was one of my best efforts, I think. Simple, forcible, instantaneous in its message and unforgettable in form — 'Shine-O.'"

"Yes," I said, "that should be hard to beat. I congratulate you." And so we parted.

I wonder if there's really any money in that fluid-mutton idea.

V. — A Case for Loyola

We had no introduction save the circumstance that we chanced both to be taking refreshment at the same time — and, after all, is not that a bond? He did not begin to talk at once, and very likely would not have done so had not a little man come hastily in, received his drink, laid his money on the bar without a word, also without a word consumed his refreshment, and hurried out again.

"You might guess a hundred times before you could say what that man does," said my neighbour.

I gave it up at once. He might have been anything requiring no muscle, and there are so many varieties of such professions. An insurance agent, but he was too busy and taciturn; a commission agent, but he was alone; a cheap oculist, but he would not be free at this hour. I therefore gave it up at once.

"He's a conjurer," said the man. "Not on the stage; goes out to parties and smokers."

I expressed the necessary amount of surprise and satisfaction.

"Odd what different things men do," he continued. "There's all sorts of trades, isn't there? I often sit for hours watching men and wondering what they are. Sometimes you can tell easily. A carpenter, for instance, often has a rule pocket in his trousers that you can spot. A lawyer's clerk has a certain way with him. Horses always leave their mark on men, and you can tell coachmen even in plain clothes. But there's many to baffle you."

"Yes," I said, "it needs a Sherlock Holmes."

"And yet there's some to puzzle even him," said my man. "Now what do you think he'd make of me?"

Upon my word I couldn't say. He was just the ordinary artisan, with a little thoughtfulness added. A small, pale man, grizzled and neat, but the clothes were old. The shininess and bagginess of

the knees suggested much kneeling; nothing else gave me a hint.

"I give that up too," I said.

"Well," he replied, "I'll tell you, because you're a stranger. I'm a worm-holer."

"A worm-holer?"

"Yes, I make worm-holes in furniture to make it seem older and fetch a better price."

"Great heavens!" I said; "I have heard of it, of course, but I never thought to meet a worm-holer face to face. How do you do it?"

"It's not difficult," he said, "to make the actual holes. The trick is to make 'em look real."

"And what becomes of the furniture?"

"America chiefly," he said. "They like old English things there, the older the better. Guaranteed Tudor things will fetch anything . . . we guarantee all ours."

"And you have no conscience about it?" I asked.

"None," he said. "Not any more. I had a little once, but there, the Americans are so happy with their finds it would be a shame to disappoint them. I look on myself as a benefactor to the nation now. I often lie awake at nights — I sleep badly — thinking of the collectors in U.S.A. hugging themselves with joy to think of the treasures I've made for them."

The Letter N

A Tragedy in High Life

Extract from the copy of Harold Pippett, only reporter for "The Eastbury Herald," as handed to the compositor.

I

INQUIRIES which have been made by one of our representatives yield the gratifying tidings that Kildin Hall, the superb Tudor residence vacated a year or so ago by Lord Glossthorpe, is again let. The new tenant, who will be a valued addition to the neighbourhood, is Mr. Michael Stirring, a retired banker.

II

From "The Eastbury Herald," 2 Sept.

Inquiries which have been made by one of our representatives yield the gratifying tidings that Kildin Hall, the superb Tudor residence vacated a year or so ago by Lord Glossthorpe, is again let. The new tenant, who will be a valued addition to the neighbourhood, is Mr. Michael Stirring, a retired baker.

III

Mr. Guy Lander, Estate Agent, to the Editor of "The Eastbury Herald."

DEAR TED, — There's a fearful bloomer in your paper this week, which you must put right as soon as you can. Mr. Stirring, who has taken Kildin, is not a baker, but a banker. Yours, G. L.

IV

The Editor of "The Eastbury Herald" to Mr. Guy Lander.

MY DEAR GUY, — Of course it's only a misprint. Pippett wrote "banker" right enough, and the ass of a compositor dropped out the "n." I'll put it right next week. No sensible person would mind. Yours, EDWARD HEDGES.

V

Mrs. Michael Stirring to the Editor of "The Eastbury Herald."

SIR, — My attention has been called to a very serious misstatement in your paper for Saturday last. It is there stated that my husband, Mr. Michael Stirring, who has taken Kildin Hall, is a retired baker. This is absolutely false. Mr. Stirring is a retired banker, than which nothing could be much more different. Mr. Stirring is at this moment too ill to read the papers, and the slander

will therefore be kept from him a little longer, but what the consequences will be when he hears of it I tremble to think. Kindly assure me that you will give the denial as much publicity as the falsehood. Yours faithfully,

AUGUSTA STIRRING.

VI

The Editor of "The Eastbury Herald" to Mrs. Michael Stirring.

The Editor of "The Eastbury Herald" presents his compliments to Mrs. Stirring and begs to express his profound regret that the misprint of which she complains should have crept into his paper. That it was a misprint and not an intentional misstatement he has the reporter's copy to prove. He will, of course, insert in the next issue of "The Eastbury Herald" a paragraph correcting the error, but he would point out to Mrs. Stirring that it was also stated in the paragraph that Mr. Stirring would be a valued addition to the neighbourhood.

VII

Mrs. Stirring to the Editor of "The Eastbury Herald."

SIR, — Whatever the cause of the slander, whether malice or misadventure, the fact remains that you have done a very cruel thing. I enclose a cutting

from the London Press, sent me by a friend, which will show you that the calumny is becoming widely spread. Mr. Stirring is so weak and dispirited that we fear he may have got some inkling of it. Your position if he discovers the worst will be terrible.

I am, Yours faithfully,
AUGUSTA STIRRING.

(THE ENCLOSURE)
From "The Morning Star"
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

We get the new movement in a nutshell in the report from Eastbury that Lord Glossthorpe has let his historic house to a retired baker named Stirring, etc., etc.

VIII

From "The Eastbury Herald," 9 Sept.

ERRATUM. — In our issue last week an unfortunate misprint made us state that the new tenant of Kildin Hall was a retired baker. The word was of course banker.

IX

Mr. John Bridger, Baker, to the Editor of "The Eastbury Herald."

DEAR HEDGES, — I was both pained and surprised to find a man of your principles and a friend of

mine writing of bakers as you did this week. Why should you "of course" have meant a banker? Why cannot a retired baker take a fine house if he wants to? I am thoroughly ashamed of you, and wish to withdraw my advertisement from your paper. Yours truly, JOHN BRIDGER.

X

Messrs. Greenery & Bills, Steam Bakery, Dumbridge.

DEAR SIR, — After the offensive slur upon bakers in the current number of your paper we feel that we have no other course but to withdraw our advertisement; so please discontinue it from this date.

Yours faithfully,
GREENERY & BILLS.

XI

Mrs. Stirring to the Editor of "The Eastbury Herald."

SIR, — I fear you have not done your best to check the progress of your slanderous paragraph, since only this morning I received the enclosed. You will probably not be surprised to learn that through your efforts the old-world paradise of Kildin, in which we had hoped to end our days, has been rendered impossible. We could not settle in a new neighbourhood with such an initial handicap.

Yours truly, AUGUSTA STIRRING.

(The Enclosure)

From "The Daily Leader"

The Triumph of Democracy

After lying empty for nearly two years Lord Glossthorpe's country seat has been let to a retired baker named Stirring, etc., etc.

XII

Mrs. Michael Stirring to Mr. Guy Lander.

Dear Sir, — After the way that the good name and fame of my husband and myself have been poisoned both in the local and the London Press, we cannot think further of coming to live at Kildin Hall. Every post brings from one or other of my friends some paragraph perpetuating the lie. Kindly therefore consider the negotiations completely at an end. I am, Yours faithfully,

Augusta Stirring.

XIII

The Editor of "The Eastbury Herald" to Mr. John Bridger.

Dear Bridger, — You were too hasty. A man has to do the best he can. When I wrote "of course," I meant it as a stroke of irony. In other words, I was, and am, and ever shall be, on your side. You will be glad to hear that in consequence of the whole thing I have got notice to leave, my

proprietor being under obligations to Lord Glossthorpe, and you may therefore restore your patronage to "The Herald" with a clear conscience.

Yours sincerely, EDWARD HEDGES.

XIV

The Editor of "The Eastbury Herald" to Mrs. Stirring.

The Editor of "The Eastbury Herald" presents his compliments to Mrs. Stirring for the last time, and again assures her that the whole trouble grew from the natural carelessness of an overworked and underpaid compositor. He regrets sincerely the unhappiness which that mistake has caused, and looks forward to a day when retired bakers and retired bankers will be considered as equally valuable additions to a neighbourhood. In retirement, as in the grave, he likes to think of all men as equal. With renewed apologies for the foul aspersion which he cast upon Mr. and Mrs. Stirring, he begs to conclude.

P.S. — Mrs. Stirring will be pleased to hear that not only the writer but the compositor are under notice to leave.

The New Chauffeur

(*An Impossible Dialogue*)

Employer. And now as to wages. What do you want?

Chauffeur. Forty pounds a year and all found.

E. And what do you expect to do for that?

C. To keep the car in good order and drive you out in it.

E. Yes. You must excuse me asking so much, but you see I don't know you at all. What kind of a temper have you?

C. Very good.

E. Yes, of course. But I mean what kind of temper have you when you are told suddenly, late on a wet night, to go to the station?

C. Very good.

E. Always?

C. Certainly.

E. Well, I want you to be quite sure. Is your temper so perfect that if I were to offer you another £5 a year to secure this point about unexpected runs in bad weather and so forth, it would make no difference?

C. I think it might make a difference.

E. And you would stand by the bargain? Never for a moment go back on it?

C. No.

E. Then we will say £45. And one other point. There are some chauffeurs so poor spirited that on an open road with no danger they will go at only, say, twelve miles an hour. You are not like that, are you?

C. Certainly not.

E. You hate going slow?

C. Yes.

E. Ah, then, that settles it, for a chauffeur who objects to go slow is no good to me. You see, I often want to go slow: in fact, always when it is very dusty and we are near cottage gardens.

C. Yes; but, of course, if you wished it ——

E. You said you hated it. Now, an unwilling servant is the last thing I require.

C. But ——

E. You mean that you could get over your dislike and become willing to meet my wishes?

C. Yes.

E. But willingness must be more spontaneous than that. Suppose we were to fix it up now absolutely, would you continue in that frame? You would always be willing?

C. Always.

E. Then shall we say another £5 a year? That makes £50.

C. Thank you very much.

E. Oh, no, not at all. It's a commercial transaction. I want what you are prepared to sell. There is one other point. What kind of an expression do you wear when you are told by your employer to take out for a drive certain of his poorer friends who cannot afford more than a small tip, if any?

C. I am perfectly content.

E. Perfectly?

C. Well, of course, one prefers to drive one's own employer.

E. Ah! — but supposing I wished all your passengers to be of equal importance and interest to you? There is no pleasure in a drive if the driver is sullen. Have you ever thought of that?

C. Never.

E. You see it now?

C. Yes, I see it now.

E. And if I were to add another £5 it would guarantee the smile?

C. Absolutely.

E. Very well, then, that makes it £55. We will leave it at that. You will begin on Monday.

The Fir-tree; Revised Version

(After Hans Christian Andersen)

ONCE upon a time there grew a fir-tree in a great Newfoundland forest.

It had a delightful life; the rain fell on it and nourished its roots; the sun shone on it and warmed its heart; now and then came a great jolly wind to wrestle with it and try its strength. The peasant children would sit at its foot and play their games and sing their little songs, and the birds roosted or sheltered in its branches. Often the squirrels frolicked there.

But the tree, although everything was so happy in its surroundings, was not satisfied. It longed to be something else. It longed to be, as it said, important in the world.

"Well," said the next tree to it, "you will be important; we all shall. Nothing is so important as the mast of a ship."

But the tree would not have it. "The mast of a ship!" he said. "Pooh! I hope to be something better than that."

Every year the surveyors came and marked a

number of the taller trees, and then wood-cutters arrived and cut them down and lopped off their branches and dragged them away to the ship-builders. The tree disdainfully watched them go.

And then one day the surveyor came and made a mark on its bark.

"Ha! ha!" said a neighbour, "now you're done for."

But the tree laughed slyly. "I know a trick worth two of that," he said, and he induced a squirrel to rub off the mark with its tail, so that when the wood-cutters came it was not felled after all.

"Oh," said the swallows when they came back next year, "you here still?"

"Surely," said the tree conceitedly. "They tried to get me, but I was too clever for them."

"But don't you want to be a mast," they said, "and hold up the sails of a beautiful ship, and swim grandly all about the seas of the world, and lie in strange harbours, and hear strange voices?"

"No," said the tree, "I don't. I dislike the sea. It is monotonous. I want to assist in influencing the world. I want to be important."

"Don't be so silly," said the swallows.

And then the tree had his wish, for one day some more wood-cutters came; but, instead of picking out the tallest and straightest trees, as

they had been used to, they cut down hundreds just as they came to them.

"Look out," said the swallows. "You'll be cut down now whether you want it or not."

"I want it," said the tree. "I want to begin to influence the world."

"Very well," said a wood-cutter, "you shall," and he gave the trunk a great blow with his axe, and then another and another, until down it fell.

"You won't be a mast," he added, "never fear. Nothing so useful! You're going to make paper, my friend."

"What is paper?" asked the tree of the swallows as they darted to and fro over its branches.

"We don't know," they said, "but we'll ask the sparrows."

The sparrows, who knew, told the tree. "Paper," they said, "is the white stuff that men read from. It used to be made from rags; but it's made from trees now because it's cheaper."

"Then will people read me?" asked the tree.

"Yes," said the sparrows.

The tree nearly fainted with rapture.

"But only for a few minutes," added the sparrows. "You're going to be newspaper paper, not book paper."

"All the same," said the tree, "I might have something worth reading on me, mightn't I? Something beautiful or grand."

"You might," said the sparrows, "but it isn't very likely."

Then the men came to haul the tree away. Poor tree, what a time it had! It was sawed into logs, and pushed, with thousands of others, into a pulping machine, and the sap oozed out of it, and it screamed with agony; and then by a dozen different processes, all extremely painful, it was made into paper.

Oh, how it wished it was still growing on the hillside with the sun and the rain, and the children at its foot, and the birds and squirrels in its branches. "I never thought the world would be like this," it said. And the other trees in the paper all around it agreed that the world was an overrated place.

And the tree went to sleep and dreamed it was a mast, and woke up crying.

Then it was rolled into a long roll five miles long and put down into the hold of a ship, and there it lay all forlorn and sea-sick for a week. A dreadful storm raged overhead — the same wind that had once tried its strength on the hillside — and as they heard it all the trees in the paper groaned as they thought of the life of the forest and the brave days that were gone.

The worst of it was that the roll in which our tree lay was close by the foot of the mast, which came through the hold just here, and he found that they

were old friends. The mast said he could think of no life so pleasant as that of a mast. "One has the sun all day," he said, "and the stars all night; one carries men and merchandise about the world; one lies in strange harbours and sees strange and entertaining sights. One is influencing the world all the time."

At these words the tree wept again. But he made an effort to be comforted. "You wouldn't suggest," he inquired timidly, "that a mast was as important, say, as a newspaper?"

The mast laughed till he shook. "Well, I like that," he said. "Why, a newspaper — a newspaper only lasts a day, and everything in it is contradicted and corrected the day after! A mast goes on for years. And another thing," he added, "which I forgot: sometimes the captain leans against it. The captain! Think of that."

But the tree was too miserable.

In the harbour it was taken out of the ship and flung on the wharf, and then it was carried to the warehouse, below a newspaper office in London. What a difference from Newfoundland, where there was air and light. Here it was dark and stuffy, and the rolls talked to each other with tears in their voices.

And then one night the roll in which our poor tree found himself was carried to the printing-rooms and fixed in the press, and down came the

heavy, messy type on it, all black and suffocating, and when the tree came to itself in the light again it was covered with words.

But, alas! the sparrows were right, for they were not beautiful words or grand words, but such words as, "Society Divorce Case," and "Double Suicide at Margate," and "Will it be fine to-morrow?" and "Breach of Promise: Comic Letters," and "The Progress of the Strike," and "Terrible Accident near Paris," and "Grisly Discovery at Leeds," and "Bankruptcy of Peer's Cousin," and "Burglary at Potter's Bar," and "More Government Lies"; and there were offers of a thousand pounds and smaller sums to cottagers for the best bunch of Sweet Williams, bringing to myriad simple homes in England, where flowers had been loved for their own sake, the alloy of avarice.

"Oh, dear," sighed the tree as it realized what it was bearing on its surface, "how I wish I had gone to sea as I was meant to do!" And he vowed that if ever he got out of this dreadful life he would never be headstrong again. But alas! —

Then, cut and folded, it was, with others like it, carried away in the cold, grey morning to a railway station bookstall, and a man bought it for a halfpenny and read it all through, and said there was nothing in it, and threw it under the seat,

and later another man found it and read it, and blew choking tobacco over it, and then wrapped up some fish in it, and took it home to his family. All that night it lay scrunched up on the floor of a squalid house, feeling very faint from the smell of fish, and longing for Newfoundland and the sun and the rain, and the children and the birds.

And the next morning an untidy woman lit the fire with it. It was an unimportant fire, and went out directly.

The Life Spherical

IT was a beautiful September day, and they floated softly over green Surrey.

"And this is England!" said the foreigner. "I am indeed glad to be here at last, and to come in such a way."

"You could not," the other replied, "have chosen a more novel or entertaining means of seeing the country for the first time."

They leaned over the edge of the basket and looked down. The earth was spread out like a map: they could see the shape of every meadow, penetrate every chimney.

"How beautiful," said the foreigner. "How orderly and precise. No wonder you conquered the world, you English. How unresting you must be! But what," he went on, "is the employment of those men there, on that great space? Are they practising warfare? See how they walk in couples, followed by small boys bent beneath some burden. One stops. The boy gives him a stick. He seems to be addressing himself to the performance of a delicate rite. See how he waves his hands. He has struck some-

thing. See how they all move on together; what purpose in their stride! It is the same all over the place — men in pairs, pursuing or striking, and small bent boys following. Tell me what they are doing. Are they tacticians?"

"No," said the other, "they are merely playing golf. That plain is called a golf links. There are thousands like that in England. It is a game, a recreation. These men are resting, recreating. You cannot see it because it is so small, but there is a little white ball which they hit."

"The pursuit has no other purpose?" asked the foreigner. "It teaches nothing? It does not lead to military skill?"

"No."

"But don't the boys play too?"

"Oh, no. They only carry."

The foreigner was silent for a while, and then he pointed again. "See," he said, "that field with the white figures. I have noticed so many. What are they doing? One man runs to a spot and waves his arm; another, some distance away, waves a club at something. Then he runs and another runs. They cross. They cross again. Some of the other figures run too. What does that mean? That surely is practice for warfare?"

"No," said the other, "that is cricket. Cricket is also a game. There are tens of thousands of fields like that all over England. They are merely

playing for amusement. The man who waved his arm bowled a ball; the man who waved his club hit it. You cannot see the ball, but it is there."

The stranger was silent again. A little later he drew attention to another field. "What is that?" he said. "There are men and girls with clubs all running among each other. Surely that is war. See how they smite! What Amazons! No wonder England leads the way!"

"No," said the other, "that is hockey. Another game."

"And is there a ball there too?" he asked.

"Yes," was the reply, "a ball."

"But see the garden of that house," he remarked; "that is not hockey. There are only four, but two are women. They also leap about and run and wave their arms. Is there a ball there?"

"Yes," was the reply, "there is a ball there. That is lawn tennis."

"But the white lines," he said. "Is not that, perhaps, out-door mathematics? That surely may help to serious things?"

"No," the other replied, "only another game. There are millions of such gardens in England with similar lines."

"Yes," he said, for they were then over Surbiton, "I see them at this moment by the hundred."

They passed on to London. It was at that time of September when football and cricket

overlap, and there was not only a crowded cricket match at the Oval but an even more crowded football match at Blackheath.

The foreigner caught sight of the Oval first. "Ah," he said, "you deceived me. For here is your cricket again, played amid a vast concourse. How can you call it a game? These crowds would not come to see a game played, but would play one themselves. It must be more than you said; it must be a form of tactics that can help to retain England's supremacy, and these men are here to learn."

"No," said the other, "no. It is just a game. In England we not only like to play games, but to see them played."

It was then that the stranger noticed Blackheath. "Ah, now I have you!" he cried. "Here is another field and another crowd; but this is surely a battle. See how they dash at each other. And yes, look, one of them has had his head cut off and the other kicks it. Splendid!"

"No," said the other, "that is no head, that is a ball. Just a ball. It is a game, like the others."

He groaned. "Then I cannot see," he said at last, "how England won her victories and became supreme."

"Ah," said the other, "at the time that England was winning her victories and climbing into supremacy, the ball was not her master."

Four Fables

1. — The Stopped Clock

ONCE upon a time there was a discredited politician whose nostrums no longer took any one in. And being thrown out of office he wandered about, seeking, like many men before him, for comfort and consolation among his inferiors. These, however, failing him, he passed on to the lower animals, and from them to the inanimate, until he came one day to a clock which, the works having been removed, consisted only of a case, a face, and two hands.

"Ha," said the politician, as he stood before it, "at last I have found something beyond question and argument more useless than myself. For you, my friend, are done. I, at any rate, still have life and movement. I can speak and act; I have a function still to perform in the world; whereas you are a mockery and a sham."

"Kindly," the clock replied, "refrain from associating me with yourself. I decline the comparison. Lifeless I may be, but not useless. For two separate moments every day I am absolutely right, and for some minutes approximately right;

whereas you, sir, are, have been, and will be, consistently wrong."

II. — Truth and Another

She came towards me rather dubiously, as though not sure of her reception.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Truth," she said.

I apologized for not having realized it.

"Never mind," she said wearily, "hardly anyone knows me. I'm always having to explain who I am, and lots of people don't understand then."

A little later I met her again.

"Well I shan't make any mistake this time," I said. "How are you, Miss Truth?"

"You are misinformed," she replied coldly; "my name is Libel."

"But you're exactly like Truth," I exclaimed — "exactly!"

"Hush!" she said.

III. — The Exemplar

Once upon a time there was a little boy who had a fit of naughtiness. He refused to obey his nurse and was, as she said afterwards, that obstreperous that her life for about half an hour was a burden. At last, just as she was in despair, a robin fluttered to the window-sill of the nursery and perched on it, peeping in.

"There," said the nurse, "look at that dear little birdie come to see what all the trouble's about. He's never refused to have his face washed and made clean, I know. I'd be ashamed to cry and scream before a little pretty innocent like that, that I would."

Now this robin, as it happened, was a poisonously wicked little bird. He was greedy and jealous and spiteful. He continually fought other and weaker birds and took away their food; he pecked sparrows and tyrannized over tits. He habitually ate too much; and quite early in life he had assisted his brothers and sisters in putting both their parents to death.

None the less the spectacle of his pretty red breast and bright eye shamed and soothed the little boy so that he became quite good again.

IV. — The Good Man and Cupid

There was once a good and worthy man, a minister of the gospel and an altruist of intense activity, who was grievously distressed by the unhappy marriages in his neighbourhood. He saw young men who ought (as he thought) to marry Jane and Eliza leading to the altar Violet and Ermyntrude; and young women fitted to be wise helpmates to John and Richard setting their caps at Reginald and Hughie; the result being the

usual bickerings and dissatisfactions of the ill-matched.

The matter troubled him so seriously that he joined a toxophilite club and took lessons in archery until he could hit the gold at five hundred yards twenty times in succession; and having reached this state of proficiency he called on Dan Cupid and expressed to that mischievous and uncovered boy his disapproval of the happy-go-lucky way in which he pulled his bow-string and directed his arrows, almost without looking. He then offered himself to shoot in Cupid's stead.

"There may be something in what you say," Cupid replied; "at any rate you seem to be older and graver and possibly wiser than I, and you certainly wear more clothes. Take the bow and try."

The good man did so, and the next day or so he was very busy conscientiously transfixing the hearts of his parishioners. Such was the accuracy of his aim that he made only one slip, and that was when, in his endeavours to unite by puncture the cardiac penumbras of pretty little Lizzie Porter and Mr. Godfrey Bloom, his eye faltered, and instead Mr. Godfrey Bloom was paired with the exceedingly unprepossessing Dorothea Atkins, who happened to be standing close by.

The good man did all that was possible to repair the mischief which he felt his lapse has caused;

but it was in vain, and Miss Lizzie Porter never regained her chance.

"Well," said Cupid, as he strolled into the good man's garden a few years after, "how has your shooting turned out? Perfectly, I suppose."

"No," the good man replied with a sigh, "I am afraid not. As a matter of fact the only happy brace in the whole bag are Godfrey and Dorothea."

"Quite so," said the little fellow. "I expected it. I always felt those archery lessons were a mistake."

"Then what is to be done?" asked the good man. "What is to be done if neither taking aim nor shooting at random avails?"

"Nothing," said Cupid as he fitted an arrow to the string. "Nothing. One just goes on shooting and hopes for the best."

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